The Phony Malpractice Crisis

Washington MONTHLY

The Bush Chicken Hawks

How hippie hypocrisy let them off the hook

By Robert Poe

October 2003 $4.50

Why Cadets Rape • Bad Political Rock • MTV's Lost Ambition • How Bush Privatized 9/11 • Reviews by David Greenberg, Joshua Hammer and Bruce Reed

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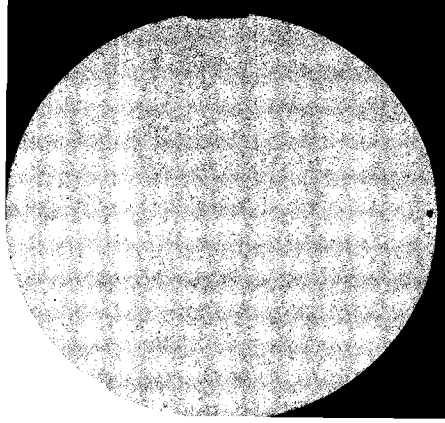

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Washington MONTHLY

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Letters

K-Street Corral

Nicholas Confessore's article, "Welcome to the Machine" (July/August), strikes fear into my heart with its suggestion that in Bush's Washington the "voice of the people" is an empty phrase. However, the public outcry in response to the Federal Communications Commission's proposed changes to restrictions on media ownership—and the impact of that outcry—suggest that ordinary citizens may yet have some voice.

Ruth Shechter
Via email

I read Nicholas Confessore's "Welcome to the Machine" article and saw his July 1 interview on Fox News Channel. In the interview, Confessore seemed to assume that conservatives still back George W. Bush. I must assume that Confessore does not listen to conservative talk radio or read postings on any of the numerous conservative online chat groups. If he did, he would know that many conservatives are outraged by Bush because his actions are so antithetical to conservative principles. His Middle East "Road Map" and free drugs for all senior citizens, for example, are just two issues that infuriate conservatives, many of whom have indicated that they will not vote for Bush in 2004.

Bush is lucky that the Democrats have a weak slate of presidential candidates, so he may yet win the election, but I do not think he should take it for granted.

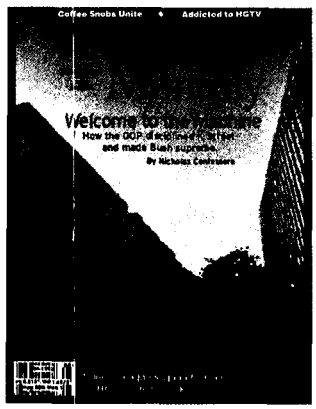
Lori-Ann Bernath
Sherman, Texas

Proof Spoof

Nicholas Thompson's article, "Science Friction" (July/August), was half-right. The Republican Party does have a tendency to ignore scientific proof.

Unfortunately, the other half of the truth is that the Democratic Party has similar problems. Also, while Thompson may be correct in asserting that most scientists lean "left," in my experience most engineers—the people who actually use science in the real world—tend to lean "right."

Mark Richard
Columbus, Ohio



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"Many conservatives are outraged by Bush because his actions are so antithetical to conservative principles"
—Lori-Ann Bernath

We at MIT work very diligently to successfully negotiate contracts and grants. In rare cases, we cannot come to terms with the agency and must refuse the contract. Indeed, MIT recently abandoned a major artificial-intelligence research project because the school will not accept restrictions on publications or students who participate in our research.

Alice P. Gast
Vice President for Research and Associate Provost
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Mass.

Nicholas Thompson makes some important points in his article, "Science Friction," but he should have also noted that, like George W. Bush, Al Gore waffled on evolution during his election campaign. There is an obvious split between secular Democrats and evangelical Republicans, but ultimately both parties will cater to the voters rather than to the data.

Alan Vanneman
Via email

Regarding "Science Friction"—a very nice article. Where are most scientists located? California, New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts—the bluest of the blue states. So it doesn't cost the GOP anything electorally to upset scientists. Conversely, where are there the fewest scientists? Old Dixie, the Plains states, and the Mountain West, except for New Mexico—all red states. Now, if there was a voting bloc of 100,000 scientists in Florida, then maybe Rove & Co. would have second thoughts about ignoring them.

Greg Shimkaveg
Research Scientist
School of Optics/CREOL
University of Central Florida
Orlando, Fla.

Daily Grind

Joshua Kurlantzick's article on coffee consumption, "Coffee Snobs Unite" (July/August), was interesting and well argued. Unfortunately, he repeats a common error when he writes, "Vietnam didn't do this all on its own—the IMF and World Bank encouraged grower countries to bulk up production as a natural source of hard currency."

The World Bank's agricultural development programs in Vietnam do not endorse or subsidize the expansion of coffee production. This "rural myth" has been floating around for several years. While the inclusion of this error does not undermine the thesis of Kurlantzick's article, it does perpetuate a pernicious journalistic misrepresentation. As a 2002 press release from the World Bank explains, "No World Bank lending has supported the rapid expansion of the Vietnamese coffee industry, contrary to

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a number of inaccurate press reports. Instead, World Bank lending to the rural sector has focused on diversifying production away from cyclical crops like coffee."

Anthony Demaso
Via email

Joshua Kurlantzick's article, "Coffee Snobs Unite," was one of the most poorly reasoned articles I have seen in your magazine.

The author argues that due to overproduction of cheap coffee, prices have become too low, thus growers go out of business and thus we will end up with a coffee shortage. Except for the last step, this makes perfect sense—if there is overproduction then growers should go out of business, which would then bring us back to "healthy" prices.

Gunnar Martinsson
Department of Mathematics
Yale University
New Haven, Conn.

As the president of the oldest and the leading association representing U.S. coffee companies, I find fault with much of the premise of Joshua Kurlantzick's article on the current crisis affecting the global coffee industry, "Coffee Snobs Unite," but I am particularly concerned about his use of quotes attributed to me.

One statement attributed to me (about coffee quality) is so completely opposite to the position of this organization, my own often-expressed views, and simple fact, that I do not even want to restate it here in order to refute it. All I can say is I have never said anything remotely close to it, and anyone else who may have would be inaccurate.

Robert F. Nelson
President & CEO
National Coffee Association of USA, Inc.
New York, N.Y.

Joshua Kurlantzick replies: In regards to Robert Nelson's complaint about his quote on specialty coffee, I apologize. I attributed to Nelson what should have been attributed to Liam Brody.

Generation Gap

I just finished reading your exceedingly telling piece about Home and Garden Television. As a producer of several series for HGTV, I appreciated your wit and insights. However, I must pick a bone with you. I am executive producer of "Flea Market Finds with the Kovels," which you have redubbed "Shopping for Junk with Old People." First of all, the show is about finds, and while there are $1.00 and $5.00 items, we also uncovered a trade sign selling for $24,000, American Indian rugs selling for $50,000, and other real treasures. Ralph and Terry don't go to flea markets to buy sunglasses, T-shirts, and jeans and other people's crap; they go to them to find the collectible treasures that enable us to appreciate our history and traditions.

But it is to the "Old People" that I object. This is an outrageous example of young whippersnapper ageism. The Kovels warrant a great deal of respect in the antiques and collectible field. For 50 years (meaning, yes they are old, but they are also experienced) they have written more than 70 books on the subject of antiques and collectibles; they publish a monthly newsletter with a paid circulation of 200,000 (and just how many copies of *The Washington Monthly* are sold?).

In point of fact, had you a fraction of the success in writing and publishing that the Kovels have had, you could buy any house you wanted in the overpriced Washington, D.C., area, pay cash for it, and not blink an eye.

George Merlis
Fisher/Merlis Television Production and Consulting
Los Angeles, Calif.

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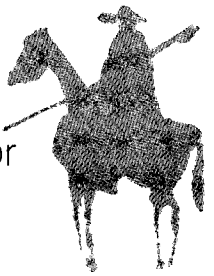
Tilting at **Windmills**

by **Charles Peters**, founding editor



Club Med Baghdad

My candidate for Optimist of the Year is Wathiq Hindo. He is an Iraqi entrepreneur who thinks Iraq "is the world's next great tourist attraction," writes *Monthly* alumnus Robert F. Worth in *The New York Times*. "He envisions package tours, four-star hotels and resorts."

Crazily enough, Hindo could be right in the long run. Look at Vietnam. Even in the short run, Hindo makes an observation that intrigued me. "You know why people get politicized? They lack entertainment."

Of course there are many reasons why people get politicized. But why not do something about the one Americans are uniquely qualified to do something about? Even making allowance for its most dreadful offerings, American television is on the whole entertaining. It also gives a glimpse of the good life enjoyed by the Western democracies. It might even lure Iraqis to stay tuned in for news that presents our side.

Hindo's optimism, it should be noted, is not unalloyed. "Like any good businessman," writes Worth, "Mr. Hindo is hedging his bets: he has founded a private security company and is training 1200 guards."

Tony of the Times

If you've been wondering about the basis for Tony Blair's claim that Iraq could deploy chemical and biological weapons within 30 or 45 minutes, Glenn Frankel of *The Washington Post* reports that, in a recent public hearing, Brian Jones, a retired official with the British defense intelligence analysis staff, said that his staff of experts was worried that the claim came from one unnamed Iraqi source quoting another unnamed source, and that there was no collateral intelligence to back it up. One unnamed source relying on another unnamed source sounds like another Blair—remember Jayson?

The Giving Spree

"We sell as much on the last day of September as we do in the whole month of January," M. Dendy Young, the chief executive of GTSI Corp., recently told Anitha Reddy of *The Washington Post*. What's the explanation? GTSI sells computers and other high-tech office equipment to the federal government, and, as we pointed out in the third issue of this magazine, April 1969, the time for vendors to get government contracts is toward the end of the fiscal year. Back then it was June 30, so the article was called "The Spring Spending Spree." It's now September 30.

This means that toward the end of summer, government agencies begin to panic about the unspent money they have on hand. If they don't use it by the end of the fiscal year, they lose it. A mad rush ensues to buy things before the Sept. 30 deadline. Ms. Reddy's is the first account of this practice I've seen in the press since our article appeared 34 years ago, so I congratulate her. At the same time I regret that neither she nor her editors seem aware of the ultimate cause of what is now the September spending spree. It is that agency officials dread the moment that a member of Congress will ask why they are requesting more money for next year when they couldn't spend all their appropriations for the current one.

Know Not, Ask Not

Vernon Loeb of *The Washington Post* has done the story on the Americans wounded in Iraq that I had expressed a desire to see in last month's Tilting. The number of wounded as of Sept. 2, when the story appeared, was 1,124. This is more than twice the total from the Persian Gulf War. One reason reporters hadn't gotten the story earlier is that the military downplayed it by releasing the number of wounded only in incidents that also involved the death of servicemen and never giving the total until asked. Still, an entire summer of incuriosity about this matter stands as a rebuke to the media. I suspect this is another example of how reporters' lack of military experience keeps them from knowing the right questions to ask.

Double the Misery, Half the Fun

Bush's latest package of tax cuts went into effect on July 1. In July, the nation's payrolls declined by 43,000 jobs. Well, you say, it's not fair to judge the results of the tax cuts on just one month's results. That's true. But doesn't it make you just a little bit nervous that the August job loss was more than twice as great—93,000?

Southern Airs

But we're happy to report that a departing administration official, John Pemberton, has found a job. Pemberton, a top air-quality official at the EPA, is going to join the Southern Company. While it's nice that he has found a job in these tough times, the identity of his new employer gives pause.

Southern is the beneficiary of a just issued EPA rule that environmentalists describe as "gutting" the Clean Air Act. The new rule relieves Southern and other utility compa-

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nies of the obligation to install anti-pollution equipment in their old coal-fired power plants. We of course do not leap to judgment. But cynics might conclude that the job is a payoff for the rule.

Evie's Apple

Of all the many reasons for parents to worry about their teenage children, the one that has always seemed to me the most important, is rarely mentioned. It is the other teenager, usually a bit older, that your child chooses as a role model. If that person is okay, you can stop worrying. If not, you have my deepest sympathy. The new movie *Thirteen* explains: Evie, the role model, leads her friend Tracy into drugs, shoplifting, and promiscuous sex.

My 39 Cents

Both Condoleezza Rice and Don Rumsfeld have recently claimed that we faced the same kind of resistance in post-war Germany that we are experiencing in Iraq. Rice asserts, "SS officers, called 'werewolves,' engaged in sabotage and attacked coalition forces"—note to Ms. Rice, the word was "Allied," not "coalition," back then—"and Germans who were cooperating with them, much like today's Baathists and Fedayeen."

Rumsfeld, apparently relying on a similar briefing paper, says that post-war Nazis "plotted sabotage of factories, power plants, rail lines. They blew up police stations and government buildings."

Rice says this problem was at its height in 1945-1947. I was in the Army in 1945, but in January 1946, I arrived in New York to enter Columbia and quickly became a newspaper junkie. That meant I read *The New York Times*, *PM*, the *New York Herald-Tribune*, and the *New York Post* with some care, and quickly scanned the *Sun*, the *World-Telegram*, the *Journal-American*, the *Daily News*, and the *Daily Mirror*—total cost was 39 cents a day. You could say that I was reasonably well informed, and I don't recall any but the most isolated incidents of sabotage by any Nazi. *PM* and the *Post*, both liberal and anti-Nazi, would have been zealous in reporting such incidents. But if you doubt my memory, see Daniel Benjamin's recent article in *Slate* that demolishes the Rice-Rumsfeld thesis.

What we know now is that most of the Nazis went into hiding or took care to conceal or minimize their past sins. Travel to Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay was popular. Those who had experience in rocketry or Soviet intelligence found jobs with us. Violent resistance was never a significant factor in American occupied Germany. Rice and Rumsfeld are lying—again.

Mobile Proof

Now that we know the basis of Tony Blair's 30-to-45 minutes, what about those mobile labs we kept being told were being used to make WMDs? Even after he declared victory, Bush called these trailers "proof" that Iraq had a biological weapons program.

But Douglas Jehl, a former *Monthly* intern now at *The New*

CUT AND RUN

Practically everyone, even those who would like to throttle George Bush for getting us into Iraq, now agrees that we should not "cut and run," that we must "stay the course." I don't. I would announce we're leaving in one year. The Iraqis, die-hard Saddamists aside, will be much more likely to cooperate with us in getting the country running again if they know that we're leaving on a sure date. Most Iraqis, even the many who dislike Saddam, don't want us telling them what to do.

Even our own hired hands are against us. An officer of the Iraqi police force employed by us recently told a *Washington Post* reporter: "In my heart, deep inside, we are with [the resisters] against the occupation. This is my country, and I encourage them."

The reason Rumsfeld and Rice have been peddling the fiction that there was significant resistance to our occupation in Germany is that they need to obscure the fact that our staying the course in Germany and Japan was based on the reality that practically all of their people either wanted us to stay, or were willing to put up with us.

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York Times, has discovered a memorandum dated June 2 of this year, from the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, that says, in Jehl's words, "that the evidence found to date did not justify the conclusion that the trailers could have been used for no other purpose than ... as mobile weapons laboratories." The C.I.A. and D.I.A. provided the intelligence on which the administration's claim was based. They did not, Jehl reports, consult State.

Worried Sick

My wife has a friend whose only son just got sent to Iraq—he's stationed near Tikrit in the most dangerous area of the country. So his mother clearly had enough to worry about. But now, she has joined the millions of others who have lost their jobs under the present administration. I suspect hers is not a vote Bush can count on.

A disturbing sidelight to this item is that one of the son's soldier friends in Iraq recently died of pneumonia. The *Post*'s Vernon Loeb reports that "thousands [of troops] have become physically and mentally ill." Should young people like these have such a rate of sickness?

Waiting for the Trickle

Remember how Wall Street's Charles Schwab urged Bush to cut or eliminate taxes on dividends, saying this would be a sure prod to jobs and growth. Bush followed his advice. A year or so later, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that Charles Schwab had saved $5.4 million in taxes himself because of the dividend tax cut. Not long after that, Charles Schwab Inc. announced that it is laying off more than 800 employees. Now you know how Bush economics works. But don't tell anyone. That would be class warfare.

Tony Blair's claim that Iraq could deploy chemical and biological weapons in 30 to 45 minutes is said to have been based on one unnamed Iraqi source quoting another unnamed source. Doesn't that remind you of another Blair, named Jayson?

Sleepless at the Scalpel

Johns Hopkins Hospital was recently found to be violating a new rule limiting residents' workweeks to 80 hours and shifts of no more than 24 hours. If a great institution like Hopkins is violating the policy, imagine what is going on at other hospitals. What is so pathetic is that the reform is actually absurdly modest—80 hours a week and 24-hour shifts are still too much to produce alert physicians.

A recent article by Jack Hackenbach of the *Charleston (W.Va.) Daily Mail* suggests there may be a similar scandal involving overworked nurses. A "reform" under consideration by the West Virginia legislature would limit nurses' hours to no more than 16 in a day.

Churchill and the *Daily News*

There is new support for my long campaign to prove that knowledge of FDR's paralysis was widespread and not concealed from the public as some historians have suggested. First is a 1933 *New York Daily News* full-page photograph of FDR leaving his home on crutches, recently reprinted by *The New York Times* that was originally seen by the several million readers that the *News* had then. Now *Monthly* alumnus Jon Meacham's absorbing new book, *Franklin and Winston*, quotes an article Churchill wrote in 1934, and included in his book *Great Contemporaries*, published in 1937.

"His lower limbs refused their offices. Crutches or assistance were needed for the smallest movement from place to place. To 99 men out of 100, such an affliction would have terminated all forms of public activity except those of the mind. He refused to accept this sentence."

Churchill was writing for public consumption. Roosevelt was not his friend at the time. They had met only once. It was during World War I, and Churchill didn't remember the meeting. He had no special source of information that was not available to the public, yet even in then-faraway England he knew about the paralysis and wrote about it, not as news, but on the assumption that others knew as well.

Malpractice Surprises

It cannot be denied that the cost of malpractice insurance is a problem. But is it really driving large numbers of doctors away from medicine?

According to recent testimony by a state health official to a committee of the Florida legislature, applications for medical licenses in Florida are not only not declining, but actually rose from 2,261 in fiscal 2000 to 2,258 in 2003. The committee also heard from a state insurance regulator who said, reports the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, "he often depends on insurance companies' information when deciding whether to raise rates." The committee was told that the state's largest malpractice insurer pays $500,000 a year to

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the Florida Medical Association. It's called "an entertainment fee." Of course it has nothing to do with the association's efforts to put a cap on malpractice verdicts.

Bureaucratic Duplicity

One reform proposed by the Department of Homeland Security may make sense: combining the jobs of the customs, immigration, and agriculture inspectors. I don't know enough to know about the merits of the agriculture-inspector part, but when you come into this country you have to wonder why you always have to deal with two different sets of people in Customs and Immigration, when one person could look at your passport and luggage and ask the questions that need to be asked.

When I worked for the Peace Corps, I was asked to conduct a study to see if there were some headquarters jobs that could be eliminated. What I discovered was that practically no one was doing nothing. Everybody did something useful, for at least part of the day. But there were a lot of overlapping jobs that could have been combined. For example, the selection, training and program officers spent a large part of their day in necessary communication with one another. If the three jobs had been made into one, a lot of meetings and phone calls could have been avoided.

Sacrificing Sham

Bush tells us defeating our remaining enemies "will take time and sacrifice." Sacrifice by whom? Certainly not by those who had their taxes cut and whose sons and daughters do not serve in the military. For 34 years this magazine has harped on the American elite's disdain for service. Not long ago, Mark Shields pointed out that of our 535 members of Congress, only one—South Dakota's Tim Johnson—"had a son or daughter who had enlisted in the U.S. military."

Fannie and Freddie, Unchaperoned

Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae are gigantic forces in the nation's economy. If they happen to head south, as the recent disquieting news about Freddie Mac suggests is at least possible, so will a lot of the rest of us. After all, according to *The Washington Post*'s Carrie Johnson, they "own or back nearly half of the nation's residential mortgage debt."

But guess who is responsible for regulating them—someone with at least a bit of muscle, like, maybe the SEC, or the Treasury Department? Not on your life. Deep in the bowels of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, you'll find a tiny outfit called the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight, not exactly a name to make the mighty quail. Here we find another example of where we need not less regulation, as conservatives advocate, but tougher regulators who will guard the public interest.

Seabiscuit Scandal

Laura Hillenbrand is one of the most gifted writers around. She appears, however, to have yielded to a temptation I understand, because I face it in a book I'm now writing. The temptation is to downplay a fact that would otherwise distract from the climactic point of your book.

In Hillenbrand's case, the moment was the 1940 Santa Anita Handicap—then the country's richest race. Seabiscuit won. There is, however, impressive evidence that he was allowed to win by the jockey riding his stablemate, Kayak II. Before the race, the owner of the two horses had said he wanted Seabiscuit to win. This desire appears not to have been ignored.

During the race, as the horses entered the stretch, Kayak II had surged from last place to third. Seabiscuit and another horse were neck and neck for the lead. When Seabiscuit moved ahead, Kayak II's jockey seemed to stop trying. Writes *The Washington Post*'s Andrew Beyer, "he put Kayak II under visible restraint and didn't use his whip, while [Seabiscuit's jockey] Pollard continued to flail Seabiscuit." Despite the radical difference in effort by the two riders, Seabiscuit beat Kayak II by only a half-length.

Beyer's account is based on film of the race. But he is supported by an eyewitness, veteran journalist Morton Cathro, who describes the event in a racing magazine, *Blood-Horse*, and says "nine out of ten [trainers, owners and other knowledgeable eyewitnesses] believed Kayak II would have won."

History as Art

Hillenbrand's book also provides an interesting illustration of how the writer of history can make history. She says that Seabiscuit got more attention than any other hero of the era. She bases her claim on the amount of newspaper space devoted to him. She may be right about the amount of space, but many other figures of the time loomed larger in the public mind, including FDR in politics and Joe Louis in sports. But Hillenbrand's eloquent book means that from now on Seabiscuit will be remembered, if not as eclipsing FDR, at least as the greatest sports figure of the era. This is simply not true. Even among horses, Seabiscuit was quickly overshadowed by Whirlaway's victories in the Triple Crown races of 1941. This reminds us that the history we think we know may be more art than fact.

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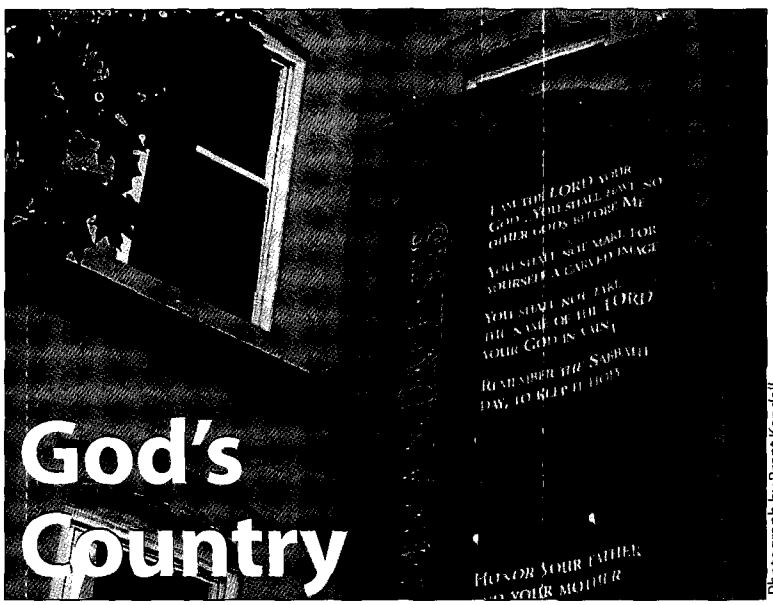
10 MILES SQUARE

"...such district (not exceeding ten miles square)...[shall] become the seat of the government of the United States."
—THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES



Photograph by Brent Kendall

Lobbying for a theocracy, one member of Congress at a time.

By Max Blumenthal

On a tree-lined street in Southeast Washington, a banner flaps against the brick front of a three-story Victorian townhouse, proclaiming "the two most important commandments"—honor thy Lord and love thy neighbor. This is the Washington office of the National Clergy Council, a little-known, but increasingly influential advocacy group representing roughly 5,000 conservative ministers in and around the country. Inside, the Reverend Rob Schenck, the founder of the organization and its self-proclaimed "missionary to elected and appointed officials," has just wrapped up a staff meeting. Located just behind the U.S. Supreme Court, the meticulous, sparsely-furnished townhouse, Schenck tells me, is a "sacred space" where he hosts a Bible study group for congressional staffers, convenes ministerial meetings, and conducts communion service. A small brick patio containing a few benches, a fountain, and a large marble rendering of the Ten Commandment tablets, serves as a "prayer garden."

With his distinctive New York accent, a style of dress more befitting of a Wall Street banker than a minister, and a relaxed demeanor—even opponents describe him as friendly and likable—Schenck is not the type you'd expect to find in a revival tent or on a pulpit. Indeed, he was raised in a liberal, secular household by Reform Jewish parents, and only converted to Christianity when he was 17. When I dropped by to visit with him in August, Schenck had just returned from Montgomery, Ala., where he organized daily rallies outside the state's supreme court building to protest the removal of Chief Justice Roy Moore's own monument—a 5,300-pound monolith carved from granite—to the Ten Commandments. And though Moore's monument was carted away, Schenck told me, by successfully directing the media spotlight on the removal and Moore's subsequent suspension, the protest was "an enormous success." Moore has become a martyr to a mounting coalition of conservative religious groups "incensed" by the debacle, says Schenck, who spent months planning for the rallies. Now, a sleeping elephant has awoken—and Schenck hopes to precipitate a stampede.

The Moore protests signal the beginning of a new day for religious

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conservatives. Until recently, the movement was in decline, with organizations like the Christian Coalition bleeding members and contributions. But with born-again Christians in the Oval Office and leadership positions in Congress, and a hard-right Pentecostal heading the Justice Department, religious conservatives have more access to the corridors of power than they have had in a decade. And recent setbacks—like the Supreme Court's sodomy ruling and Canada's legalization of gay marriage—have served to energize their ranks.

That rising tide is lifting even the boats of people like Schenck, who in his beliefs and actions has long been on the outer edge of the Christian right. As a leader of the radical anti-abortion group Operation Rescue, Schenck was regarded as something of an embarrassment even by other religious conservatives. Now Schenck is counting on issues like the Ten Commandments to build his clout and respectability.

The National Clergy Council has nothing like the Beltway muscle of, say, James Dobson's Family Research Council. But its members lead a particularly vocal and energized minority among religious conservatives: those who favor the substitution of Biblical literalism for civil law. Fittingly, the most visible manifestation of Schenck's influence are the small, polished stone plaques, inscribed with the Ten Commandments, that he has distributed to more than 400 politicians in Washington and across the country. They include Rep. Tom Delay (R-Texas)—"His response was extremely positive"—Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) and Bush's "Ambassador for Religious Liberty," John V. Hanford, who hand-delivered Schenck's plaque to the president. Schenck asks those who accept the plaque to "display it and obey it," suggesting that in their acceptance, they pledge to work toward a government rooted in Mosaic moral law and "Judeo-Christian ethics." And with so many lawmakers already displaying their plaques, Schenck is optimistic that as his new movement increases its activity and gathers support, his influence in Washington will help release a wave of Christian fervor upon the seats of power nationwide. "We have the president, both leaders of Congress, Hastert and Delay, all of whom share what I would call an orthodox Christian worldview. All of them display the Ten Commandments," he told me. "That's something we dare not take lightly."

As a young man studying at the Elim Bible Institute in Lima, N.Y., in the early 1980's, Schenck was introduced to political activism through the teachings of Francis Schaeffer, a theologian credited with mobilizing evangelical action against abortion. His best-selling 1980 book, *A Christian Manifesto*, advocated abortion protest as a means to undermine the credibility of a secular law. "Schaeffer showed us [evangelicals] that these Biblical truths apply to all of culture and society," Schenck explained. "He taught us the responsibility—and I use this very guardedly—to enforce those truths in the sense that we should be confident enough about them to know that they are good for us and other people.... Ultimately, this should be reflected in the highest law of the land." During the early 1990s, Schenck put those ideas into practice. He was arrested a dozen times during protests outside women's health clinics and abortion doctors' homes, and is renowned for outrageous publicity stunts, including dangling an aborted fetus in Bill Clinton's face outside the 1992 Democratic National Convention. With former Elim classmate Randall Terry, Schenck helped start Operation Rescue, a hardline anti-abortion group that embraced "direct action" in an effort to shut down reproductive health

TIDBITS& OUTRAGES

Blind Faith

As the jobless rate continues to climb, Joshua Bolten, director of the White House's Office of Management and Budget, recently told Congress, "I think the art and science of economics has not yet advanced to the stage where we can really properly capture all the positive effects the tax cuts do have on the economy."

Who wouldn't trust his advice?

Former Army Secretary Thomas E. White has written a blueprint for post-war reconstruction in Iraq, including how to revitalize the country's oil industry. White's writing from a position of authority on energy issues: Before entering government, he was a top Enron official.

Was Ben Affleck busy?

The CIA recently attempted to draft Jennifer Garner—who plays agent Sydney Bristow on ABC's television drama "Alias"—to film recruitment videos for the agency.

Amen!

A new teen bible, *Revolve*, is intended to allow teen girls to read the good book without losing face. In addition to glossy, *Jane*-esque photos, this edition of the Holy Scripture developed by leading Bible publisher Thomas Nelson includes sidebars with counsel such as: "The Fire of God's love burns out the sin the same way the hot steam routs the dirt out of your pores."

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clinics and prevent doctors from practicing abortion.

Meanwhile, Schenck was making inroads into Washington. He had first met John Ashcroft during the 1980s, while taking part in a fellowship at a Pentecostal church outside Buffalo; the two reconnected in 1994, when Ashcroft moved to Washington to serve as the junior senator from Missouri. Meeting at Ashcroft's home, a small apartment above a garage on Capitol Hill, the two would sing hymns and pray for the country with a small group of other ministers. A year later, Schenck "planted," as he puts it, the National Community Church, a charismatic Pentecostal congregation, in order to "reach out to the subculture on Capitol Hill." Beginning, Schenck recalls, in a dilapidated building in a crime-ridden neighborhood of Southeast Washington, lack of air conditioning during the capital's notoriously sultry summers prompted the congregation's relocation to an even more unorthodox location—the AMC movie theatre in Washington's Union Station. The congregation soon came to include Ashcroft and his family, as well as a number of congressional staffers.

But just as Schenck's star was rising in Washington, some Operation Rescue members decided to take their direct action to the next level. In 1998, while cooking dinner for his wife and four children, Barnett Slepian—an abortion doctor whose home had been the site of protests by Schenck and his followers years before—was shot to death through his kitchen window by James Kopp, a former student of Schaeffer's and a volunteer at Operation Rescue's Binghamton, N.Y., office. Slepian's assassination became a public relations disaster for the organizations, and even though Schenck denounced the killing, the organization's more extremist members insisted that it was justified. When Schenck placed flowers at the doorstep of Slepian's office, they were returned abruptly by his infuriated wife along with a letter—later made public—that read, "It's your 'passive' following that incited the violence that killed Bart [Barnett Slepian] and took away both my and my children's future." By the end of Clinton's second term, the organization had spiraled into oblivion as militant factions seized the reins of the movement, leaving it shrunken and spent. Schenck is still haunted by the memory of Slepian's murder. "My brother and I felt very badly about the shooting that occurred in the wake of the massive pro-life demonstrations," he said. "We asked ourselves—where did we go wrong in communicating truth?"

Such communication became much easier in 2001, however, after George W. Bush won back the White House. Today, conservative Republicans control both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, and Schenck has gone from an outsider to part of the establishment. In the past, he used the National Clergy Council as a surrogate funding mechanism for Operation Rescue; today, it's his platform to lobby for legislation like the Ten Commandments Defense Act, a bill introduced on the House floor this May to permit the commandments' display on state-owned property. And when it comes to the abortion debate, he's counting on his longtime acquaintance and occasional prayer-partner Ashcroft, who once waved a sonogram of his granddaughter's fetus on the Senate floor during a fiery speech against abortion, and now occupies the nation's highest law-enforcement office. Ashcroft continues to attend services at the National Community Church, though Schenck worries that, as attorney general, he may be tempted to stray from the flock. "Lately, [Ashcroft] has said that he will uphold the laws as interpreted by the Supreme Court, which means defending Roe v. Wade," Schenck observed gravely. "To be honest, I think John Ashcroft is in conflict with his conscience."

Schenck is also on a "massive mission" to rally support for a constitutional amendment, sponsored by Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Penn.), that would ban gay marriage. Santorum—who in a May commencement speech urged grads of Christendom College to "be a radical, be a rebel, to rebel against the popular culture"—is a close associate of Schenck, serving with him on the board of the Institute on Religion and Public Policy, a conservative think tank. Santorum was instrumental in advancing recent legislation to ban late-term abortions, legislation which was signed into law this year—a dream come true for Schenck, who was so upset by Clinton's veto of a similar bill in 1996 that he confronted the president during a Christmas Eve service at the National Cathedral and whispered in his ear, "God will hold you to account, Mr. President." (He was then removed from the chapel and interrogated by Secret Service agents.)

He takes a different view, however, of the current president, believing that his own ongoing struggle to usher in a new era of overt religious commitment in American government hinges upon Bush's political future. "We are literally at a crisis point. Things could go much further toward religious conservatism, which we'd like to see. Or there could be a reactionary development where it goes decidedly opposite of that, to a restless secularism. It all comes down to the next election."

Max Blumenthal is a writer in Los Angeles.

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Con Tract

The theory behind neocon self-deception.

By Laura Rozen

Historians may someday have convincing answers to the question of why U.S. intelligence under George W. Bush so wildly overestimated the threat from Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction programs. Until that day, however, curious minds might want to consult an obscure essay, "Leo Strauss and the World of Intelligence (By Which We Do Not Mean Nous)," published a few years ago by Gary Schmitt and Abram Shulsky. Schmitt is with the neo-conservative Project for the New American Century. Shulsky, of the RAND Corp. when the essay was written, is now director of the Department of Defense Office of Special Plans. OSP is the infamous alternative intelligence agency created in the immediate aftermath of September 11 by Pentagon hardliners who believed that the C.I.A. and other intelligence agencies had missed or were soft-peddling evidence of Saddam's WMD programs and links to al Qaeda. As director of OSP, Shulsky was at the center of administration efforts to weave together bits of intelligence to match their rock-solid belief that Saddam was an imminent and omnipresent threat. The essay provides fascinating insight into what these folks were thinking—and into their circle's almost literary obsession with finding potential hidden meanings in the words and actions of rogue regimes.

In the essay—which appeared in a 1999 dusty academic tome, *Leo Strauss, the Straussians, and the American Regime*, Shulsky and Schmitt attempt to discern what the late political philosopher Leo Strauss would have said about the modes of thinking that dominate conventional U.S. intelligence analysis. Strauss was a mentor to many of the leading neoconservative lights, including Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, who helped create OSP. Shulsky was a student of Strauss at the University of Chicago in the 1960s; Schmitt did his Ph.D. work there in the 1970s after Strauss had died but was still a leading influence. They argue that Strauss would have attacked the prevailing trend in U.S. intelligence analysis known as the "social-scientific method," an approach advanced by Sherman Kent, a former Yale history professor and member of the WWII-era Office of Strategic Services (the predecessor to the C.I.A.). Kent's method, say the authors, urged U.S. intelligence analysts to operate more like social scientists, conducting systematic research and analysis to predict the future behavior of adversaries. But, according to the authors, this method assumes that those foes act according to universal principles. In other words, you can guess the enemy's next move going by what you would do in his position—as if the two of you are engaged in a giant game of chess.

This strategy, say the authors, grew out of the generally liberal mindset that dominated both Washington and academic life in the years after World War II--"[a] 'universalistic' outlook," say the authors, "which believes...that oth-

The Washington Monthly's

Monthly Journalism Award

Avery Comorow

"Jesica's Story"
U.S. News & World Report
July 28-August 4, 2003

Pairing touching personal detail with rigorous system analysis, Avery Comorow explores the failure of the nation's organ transplant system and the doctors and medical professionals who run it to provide sufficient safeguards to prevent tragic mistakes. Comorow structures this story around one such mistake: the story of 17-year old Jesica Santillan, a Mexican girl whose parents brought her to the United States illegally so she could have the heart transplant she needed to save her life. Santillan died when Duke University doctors gave her a heart and set of lungs that did not match her blood type. Her body rejected the new organs, and, after a series of subsequent operations and a second transplant failed to save her, she died after going into cardiac arrest. Comorow goes into expert depth to detail why even the most respected medical institutions can make mistakes with transplants – and to offer some cutting suggestions for reform.

The Monthly Journalism Award is presented each month to one or more newspaper, magazine, radio or television stories (or series of stories) that demonstrate a commitment to the public interest. We are particularly interested in reporting that explains the successes and failures of government agencies at all levels and of other institutions such as the media, corporations, unions, and foundations that contribute to the existence of solution of public problems. Please send nominations (including a copy of the article or broadcast text) to The Washington Monthly Journalism Award, 733 15th Street, NW, Suite 520, Washington, DC 20005. Or email us at editors@washingtonmonthly.com.

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ers aspire to an American way of life; the 'melting pot' tradition, which suggests that, despite superficial differences ... people are fundamentally alike and want the same things."

Shulsky and Schmitt argue that such a belief system foolishly disregards the most important lesson from Strauss's teachings: that the nature of the regime or government under analysis means everything in trying to predict its intentions. Rogue regimes and dictatorships, they argue, operate under totally different value systems and principles than do democracies like the United States. Tyrannies warp the very souls of those who live under and serve them. In fundamental ways, this makes subjects of tyrannies not like us. "Because of the importance of the regime, it would be foolish to expect to be able to deduce theories of political behavior that would be universal, i.e. that would apply to democracies and tyrannies alike," Shulsky and Schmitt write.

Central to understanding the behavior of rogue regimes, Shulsky and Schmitt posit, is these regimes' use of deception. Tyrannies are built on foundations of lies, and those who live under them must, for survival, speak in code, even when speaking the truth. The words and behavior of dictators and their henchmen, therefore, mask hidden meanings; they cannot be understood at face value. Rather than grasp this difference, they argue, conventional intelligence experts have adopted a flawed analytical strategy called mirror-imaging—"i.e., imagining that the country one is studying is fundamentally similar to one's own and hence can be understood in the same terms."

Shulsky and Schmitt have a point: Mirror-imaging is indeed a problem at the C.I.A. But nevertheless, much of their critique belabors a straw man. Mirror-imaging, though a real problem, is not a strategy which anyone at the C.I.A. or elsewhere in the intelligence community defends. Rather, it's an error that analysts are trained to avoid, but too often commit anyway. In 1998, for instance, the C.I.A. was caught flat-footed when India resumed testing nuclear weapons, a move that sparked a renewed arms race with neighboring Pakistan. The C.I.A. conducted an inquiry into its own failure and concluded that agency analysts could easily have foreseen the move. In the previous election, Hindu nationalist politicians had publicly promised to resume nuclear testing; but when they won, C.I.A. analysts simply presumed that they would act like their American counterparts and not follow through on their more-reckless campaign pledges (see "The C.I.A.'s Weakest Link," by Loch Johnson, July/August 2001). On the eve of the detonations, the Indian government assured Western diplomats that they were not going to resume testing, and the agency chose to believe them. This deception, by democratic India, underscores another weakness in Shulsky and Schmitt's critique: Tyrannies don't exactly have a monopoly on deception.

The neocon policy intellectuals who came to power in the Bush administration were convinced that Saddam's denials that he had reconstituted his nuclear or other WMD programs were an elaborate smokescreen. But unlike many other analysts, the neocons refused to be "fooled" by a general lack of hard evidence to this effect or that he had made alliances with Osama bin Laden. Instead, they imputed to stray bits of intelligence data—a reported meeting with a terrorist here, an aluminum tube there—an almost mystical significance, seeing each as evidence of Saddam's boundless capacity for deceit.

Were the neocons fooling themselves? Or were they aware of the thinness of the evidence but willing to use it deceitfully to convince the public—and perhaps the president himself—to support the invasion? The neocons' harshest critics believe the latter. They note, for instance, that Shulsky's Special Plans office was borne out of the same Pentagon department where Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith once set up the equally mysterious "Office of Strategic Influence," to send out disinformation to the enemy. That enterprise was quickly dismantled once lawmakers got wind of the fact that such an office could also—perhaps inadvertently—disseminate disinformation to the American public.

Critics also point to passages in Strauss's own writings which they say countenance deception, even against the public, if committed by the select few who are wise enough to truly understand the national interest. Whether Strauss himself actually advocated this view is debatable; Shulsky and Schmitt don't make the argument in their essay. But they do credit their mentor with an acceptance of the inevitability of deception that seems, in retrospect, rather suggestive. "Strauss's view certainly alerts one to the possibility that political life may be closely linked to deception," the authors write. "Indeed, it suggests that deception is the norm in political life, and the hope, to say nothing of the expectation, of establishing a politics that can dispense with it is the exception."

In the end, the neocons' cynicism about Saddam may prove to have been right, but in ways contrary to what they believed. As Bob Drogin of the *Los Angeles Times* reported in August, U.S. weapons inspectors in Iraq are investigating the possibility that Saddam, eager to project an image of strength to enemies within and outside the country, sent defectors to the West with bogus stories about the creation and maintenance of weapons stockpiles and programs that he didn't, in fact, have. "We were prisoners of our own beliefs," a senior U.S. weapons expert told Drogin. "We said Saddam Hussein was a master of denial and deception. Then when we couldn't find anything, we said that

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proved it, instead of questioning our own assumptions."

The imprisonment-by-assumption thesis might also explain another mystery historians will have to sort out: how the neocons managed to convince themselves and many others that controlling post-Saddam Iraq would be a cakewalk because virtually all Iraqis would welcome invading G.I.s as liberators. Talk about mirror-imaging!

In a revealing moment of lightness in the essay, Shulsky and Schmitt affectionately compare their late mentor Strauss to the world-weary, disillusioned, but deeply wise figure from a world, not of deception, but of avowed fiction protagonist of the John Le Carré spy novel series, George Smiley. "In his gentleness, his ability to concentrate on detail, his consequent success in looking below the surface and reading between the lines, and his seeming unworldliness," they write, "Leo Strauss may even be said to resemble, however faintly, the George Smiley of John Le Carré's novels."

But the novels of Le Carré may reveal more about what would take place in the Pentagon's Office of Special Plans than the essay's authors could have recognized. Drawn to conclusions based on their obsessive conviction that rogue regimes like Saddam's must harbor "hidden meanings," that they must be "hiding something," the authors nevertheless fail to maintain the intellectual discipline necessary to reach the correct conclusion about what precisely it was that Saddam was hiding. Indeed, the Iraq intelligence debacle swirling around Shulsky's OSP seems to fit some of Le Carre's enduring revelations about the espionage business: that intelligence is almost always politicized, and that the ideological assumptions and personal obsessions that drive people in the spook world can be as disabling as the secrets and disinformation with which their enemies set about to deceive them.

Laura Rozen writes on national security issues in Washington, D.C.

Sporting Chances

Can a presidential candidate's taste in sports reveal his or her odds of victory? You decide.

By Garance Franke-Ruta

Candidate & Sport	Position	Profile of Sport	Profile of Candidate	Fun Fact
Howard Dean, Women's Hockey	Daughter's Coach	Unconventional, loud, raucous, gaining popular momentum, but still not big in the South.	Ditto	Gov. Dean was the main financial force behind creation of girls' hockey league in VT high schools.
Dick Gephardt, Baseball	St. Louis Cardinals Fan	Old-fashioned, all-American stand-by, now losing energy and fans.	Ditto	During Cardinals' games, Gephardt must be dragged away from minority speaker's office TV to make floor votes.
John Kerry, Windsurfing	"Gear Guy"	Sophisticated, exotic, elitist, requiring a lot of cash just to hang in the game.	Ditto	Kerry was the cover model for the 1998 issue of *American Windsurfer* magazine.
John Edwards, Soccer	Soccer Dad	Spry, youthful, but still years away from being a mainstream American favorite.	Ditto	Edwards coached his childrens' soccer teams for 12 years.
Joe Lieberman, "The sport of back and forth with staff," says his press secretary.	Wait, is that a sport?	Wonky, colorless.	Ditto	Press secretary says Lieberman's favorite team is either "the Yankees or the Mets"—sort of like saying he votes "Democrat or Republican."
Bob Graham, Golf	Expert Putter	Slow-paced, meticulous, and popular with seniors in Florida.	Ditto	Graham has been known to retrieve lost golf balls from lakes.
Wesley Clark, Swimming	High School Champion	Highly competitive, grueling, a fast start is crucial.	Ditto	When the press came to a YMCA where Clark was swimming, an aide asked photographers not to shoot Clark in his speedo.
Al Sharpton, Boxing	Former Promoter	Brash, flamboyant, slightly corrupt, cult of personality is key to appeal.	Ditto	First met boxing promoter Don King in 1974 when he traveled to the Ali-Foreman "Rumble in the Jungle" fight to promote a James Brown concert.
Dennis Kucinich, Football	Third-string Quarterback in high school	Blue-collar favorite; over by January.	Ditto	High school coach says, "Eight people would hit him and he'd get right back up." He'll need that attitude.
Carol Moseley Braun, Antiquing	Playing a different game than the others	Involves hunting for something rare that you're unlikely to find	Ditto	Press secretary says Braun doesn't have much time now to indulge in hobby. She will soon.

Garance Franke-Ruta is a senior editor of *The American Prospect*.

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WHO'S WHO

There were two revelations from last month's sneak preview of the new HBO series "K Street," held at Washington's Palm restaurant. The first occurred when the guests—including former House Speaker **Newt Gingrich**, former White House press secretary **Ari Fleischer**, Federal Reserve chairman **Alan Greenspan**, "Meet the Press" host **Tim Russert**, Democratic National Committee chairman **Terry McAuliffe**, and television correspondents **Norah O'Donnell**, **Andrea Mitchell**, and **Dana Bash**—got a look at the series' co-executive producer, **George Clooney**. Like that other heartthrob activist/actor who likes to get behind the camera, **Robert Redford**, it turns out that Clooney is shorter than he seems on the screen, but every bit as handsome. As one gaggle of starstruck women commented on the actor's appearance, former **Bill Clinton** press secretary **Joe Lockhart** gushed, "I think beauty is something that comes from the inside."

The second revelation came when video screens set up around the restaurant played a preview of the first episode, which Clooney and his co-executive producer, **Steven Soderbergh**, had just finished editing a few hours earlier. The episode features **James Carville** and **Mary Matalin** playing themselves, but as partners in a fictional K Street lobbying/consulting/PR firm. The comic drama revolves around Carville's accepting an invitation to prep Democratic presidential candidate How **Howard Dean** for an upcoming debate, causing Matalin heartburn as she sucks up to such leading Hill Republicans as Sen. **Rick Santorum** (R-Penn.)—Carville's assistance, she keeps saying, is just part of his "political addiction." During the debate prep, Carville's partner, Democratic consultant **Paul Begala**, asks Dean how he can be sympathetic to African Americans when there are so few of them in his home state. Carville then gives Dean a line to use in the upcoming debate: If the percentage of minorities in one's state defines your views on civil rights, he cracks, **Trent Lott** would be **Martin Luther King, Jr.** Those at the Palm immediately recognized the line as one Dean had in fact used at the real-life Democratic debate in Baltimore. Apparently Dean recognizes good advice when he hears it.

The "rising stars" of 1994's House GOP class are quickly dropping out of sight. In 2002, **Steve Largent** lost his bid for the governor's mansion in Oklahoma and **J.C. Watts** opted for life in the private sector, leaving the House Republican caucus devoid of any African Americans. Now, the once-highly-touted Rep. **Jennifer Dunn (R-Wash.)**—who lost her position in the Republican leadership when she failed to win the House Majority Leader position from **Dick Armey** (R-Texas) in 1998—may not defend her seat in 2004. Dunn already turned down White House entreaties in April to challenge Sen. **Patty Murray** (D-Wash.) in next year's campaign for the Senate. Newly engaged (with a six-carat Ceylon sapphire ring to prove it), the 61-year-old Dunn is reportedly tempted to leave Congress in favor of spending quality time with her businessman fiancé.

Following the first Gulf War, neoconservative policy intellectuals like **Richard Perle**, **Paul Wolfowitz**, and **William Kristol** formed the Project for the New American Century, a think tank which advocates many of the policies—from neo-imperialism to "preemptive" war—that would come to inform the Bush administration's post 9/11 national-security policy. Now a group of leading scholars, foreign policy thinkers, and business lobbyists from across the political spectrum have to come together to form an alternative—what one participant describes as "the anti-imperialist coalition." They include Boston University's **Andrew Bacevich**, **Ted Galen Carpenter** and **Christopher A. Preble** of the Cato Institute, the New America Foundation's **Steven Clemons**, Georgetown University's **Charles Kupchan**, **E. Wayne Merry** of the American Foreign Policy Council, and **Alan Tonelson** of the U.S. Business & Industrial Council Educational Foundation.

The resignation of Palestinian Authority Prime Minister **Mahmoud Abbas** was clearly a blow to the prestige of Secretary of State **Colin Powell**, who had successfully lobbied for

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Abbas's installation as a fulfillment of President **George W. Bush**'s promise for "new leadership" in the P.A., the cornerstone of Bush's "road map" for peace in the Middle East. A number of neoconservative commentators outside the administration, such as **Joshua Muravchik**, had warned of Abbas's weakness and predicted that Powell's strategy was "a road map to nowhere." But Powell's defeat is hardly a victory for the neocons' strongest ally in the White House, **Elliott Abrams**, head of Middle East policy at the National Security Council. Though initially skeptical, Abrams got fully on board with the road map and had backed the choice of Abbas. With Abbas out, says one source, the administration is "totally out of ideas."

Republicans in South Dakota have more to worry about than Rep. **William Janklow**'s (R-S.D.) manslaughter charge for his role in a fatal road accident in August. If Janklow resigns his seat—and public pressure is mounting for him to do so—Gov. **Mike Rounds** has 10 days to announce the date of a special election. And this puts Janklow's predecessor, **John Thune**, in a difficult position. Thune, who lost his bid to upset Sen. **Tim Johnson** (D-S.D.) in 2002, had been the odds-on favorite to challenge the state's other senator **Tom Daschle** in 2004. If Thune runs for his old congressional position instead, Daschle will face a fairly easy road to reelection. On the other hand, if Thune opts not to enter the special election, he risks incurring the wrath of South Dakota Republicans who already fear he is more concerned about his own career—he chose not to run in the 2002 gubernatorial race although he would have won it handily—than about the state party. A Thune-less special election would also give the edge to Democrat **Stephanie Herseth**, who narrowly lost to Janklow last fall and who is seriously considering another run for the seat.

Last month, we wondered whether **Don Rumsfeld** was losing faith in his undersecretary for policy, **Douglas Feith**. Confirmation now comes from *The Washington Times*' **Rowan Scarborough**, who recently quoted a Pentagon source saying "Feith's star is falling." Why? It was Feith who pushed to make Saddam's suspected WMD the top rationale for going to war with Iraq.

Los Angeles Times Syndicate/Taylor Jones

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Mourning Has Broken

How Bush privatized September 11.

By Benjamin Wallace-Wells

President Bush did not say much publicly last month, on the second anniversary of September 11. He stood with his staff on the White House's sunny South Lawn as a chaplain conducted a private memorial service for those killed, but the president did not address the small crowd. He clenched his wife's hand during a moment of silence at 8:46 a.m., two years to the minute since the first hijacked plane struck the World Trade Center. Then he attended a short service at prim, yellow St. John's Episcopal Church, a block from the White House; on his way out of church he passed some reporters and gave them a few brief comments (99 words total) on the solemnity of the day. Then he went back inside his White House offices; that was all.

The President's muted remembrance could not have been more different from the way he, and the rest of the country, had commemorated the attacks the year before. On September 11, 2002, the president had taken a day-long tour around the Northeast, stopping for ceremonies at each disaster site: In the morning he visited Ground Zero, then the Pentagon, then a windy field outside Shanksville, Pennsylvania, before delivering a televised address to the nation in the evening from Ellis Island. I was a newspaper reporter in Philadelphia at the time, and I spent my morning on a similar, though much smaller-scale, tour of a half-dozen suburban towns, all of which had trundled out their cub scouts, police officers, and municipal flags for local commemorations. In the tiny mill town of Phoenixville, citizens had three options for memorial ceremonies: the county's, the Catholic church's, or the town's, which I visited, where the mayor read a solemn speech in front of the town's two dozen police officers, each in his dressiest uniform. The need to memorialize, even in this small, out-of-the-way community, was urgent and universal.

That same urgency was no longer evident on the second anniversary, in Phoenixville or in Washington. Nor was there any noticeable clamor for more full-throated commemorations. "Practically nobody has any particular use for the second anniversary," wrote Christopher Hitchens, in *Slate*, putting into words what many people were too embarrassed to admit. Two years after the event, the memorials already seem to have started to slip into the same obscure, dutifully patriotic realm that contains Labor Day and Memorial Day ceremonies.

That is due in part to the simple passage of time—priorities shift, memories fade, and we forget. But one year just isn't *that* much time. And we haven't simply seen a decline in the number, prominence, or popularity of the memorials: Their substance—what is being commemorated—has changed, too. On Ellis Island in 2002, Bush spoke of the attacks having brought the nation "to grieve together, to stand together, to serve each other and our country." Media remembrances depicted heroic firefighters, neighbors helping neighbors, and the defiant words of the president spoken atop the smoldering mound at Ground Zero.

Last month, there was little talk of unity and togetherness. Instead, media coverage focused on the physical fact of the attacks, the falling men and rubble, the stories of the victims, and their families' grief, sometimes to the point of obscurity. "The Today Show" devoted segments of two

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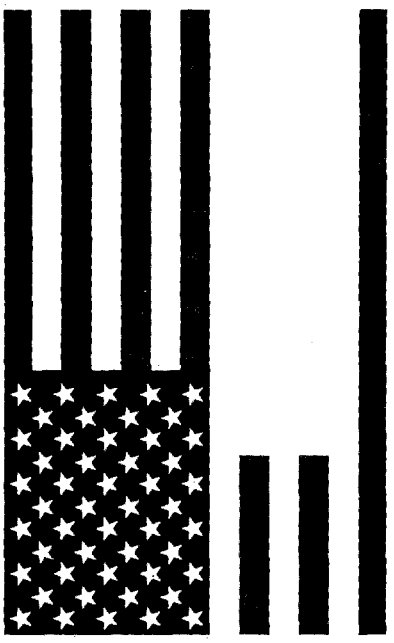
consecutive programs (September 10 and 11) to the tangential and uninspiring question of whether the families of World Trade Center victims should win the right to sue the Port Authority and the airlines for failing to prevent the attacks. Public displays of national unity gave way to quiet rituals and private anguish.

This change matched Americans' evolving attitudes towards the attacks in general. In the first months after September 11, the trauma sparked a vast national coming together: in politics, in our communities, in our sorrow. Members of both parties in Congress gathered on the Capitol steps and spontaneously broke into a rendition of "God Bless America," and there was nothing staged or spotlight-chasing about the moment; it simply spoke for the nation. Poll data after September 11 showed dramatic increases in just about every measure of unity and public-spiritedness, from volunteerism to faith in government.



Art by Christina Larson

In a different era, or under a different president, this sense of common purpose might have been husbanded to lasting positive ends. But it wasn't. Instead, in the weeks and months after September 11, the sentiments faded, and by last month had completely disappeared. Aside from one very public matter—a bleeding guerrilla war in Iraq—about the only lasting effect of the attacks is the higher level of jitteriness that most Americans quietly carry around inside of them. September 11 has been made into a private matter.

Come together, over me

It's easy now to look back on the authentic coming together in those first weeks, indeed months, after the attacks and see them as phenomena of the moment, and to see the endless pronouncements that America would be "forever changed" as merely hype, or naivete. But in the tremulous, fragile, up-is-down aftermath of the attacks, there really was a nearly universal, taken-for-granted sense that September 11 was not only terrible but also historic and monumental, the sort of event that occurs "only once or twice a century," in the words of political scientist Robert Putnam. Even more skeptical social scientists, who over the years had become resigned to watching measures of public engagement in America decline, were shocked by the rallying effect of September 11, and thought that, like Pearl Harbor, it might permanently change the way Americans related to each other, their government, and their communities. "There's a sense that we might need a really major, historic event to reverse all these trends," Thomas Patterson, a Harvard political scientist, told me shortly after the first anniversary, "and many of us thought September 11 could be that event."

Some responses did prove to be fleeting. The much-hyped increase in religious attendance, for instance, subsided after only a month. Calls to military recruiters did spike, but the number of young men and women who actually signed up for service did not.

But other measures of public-spiritedness stayed high. Six months later, fully half of Americans still said that September 11 had made them more confident that their government would do right. Public confidence in everything from Congress to the media to other ethnic groups to local shop clerks also remained substantially higher than before September 11. At the same half-year point, pollsters found that Americans had more faith that people in their communities would personally sacrifice in order to combat a common problem, such as a water shortage, than before the attacks. Perhaps most significantly, those under age 35 were more affected than the general population, suggesting that such deepening of public attitude had at least the potential to endure.

The politics of sacrifice

But to endure, this new public spirit had to be nurtured and validated by the country's leaders. Instead, the president and the GOP did something close to the opposite.

On September 20, in his first lengthy national address after the attacks, Bush told the citizens of the United States what they personally could do: "Live your lives and hug your children," he said. Be patient with FBI investigations and travel delays, and "your continued participation and confidence in the American economy" would be greatly appreciated.

Telling Americans to go shopping, however, didn't exactly stir the nation's patriotic blood, and commentators offered some light, love-tap criticism. So in a televised national address on October 11, 2001, the president, who had been seeding his speeches with general references to "sacrifice" and "service," told American kids to collect pennies for Afghan children. This slight initiative was well-received, and he followed it in his 2002 State of the Union address with a more ambitious proposal to expand national service, introducing a new program, the USA Freedom Corps, which would increase AmeriCorps by 200,000 people. More dramatically still, he told his countrymen something that they really wanted to hear: that it was their responsibility to serve. "My call tonight," Bush said, "is for every American to commit at least two years—4,000 hours over the rest of your lifetime—to the service of your neighbors and your nation."

It was his most wildly—and widely—applauded line of the night, universally lauded by the next morning's editorialists. Young people did more than clap: Over the next

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year, record numbers signed up for AmeriCorps, and enrollment in the Peace Corps and Teach for America jumped, too—further evidence that the post-September 11 rally had legs.

But those legs soon were cut out from under it. The president did send up a national service bill, and leaders of both parties had made evident their inclination to support it. But thanks to the antagonism of some House Republicans and indifference in the White House, the measure never made it to the floor of Congress. Worse, the existing AmeriCorps program has gone unauthorized in each budget since September 11, and now, in a round of cuts proposed in August by the president for 2004, faces extinction. "I've heard the White House supports [national service], but I've not seen any effort that they've been making," Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) told *The Washington Post* in August.

Of course, AmeriCorps is only one program. The president had many other ways of keeping the nation united and its citizens engaged—he might have encouraged enlistments, the better to relieve troops overstretched by tough, back-to-back deployments. Yet curiously, in the two years since September 11, he has not once publicly urged young people to join the military, nor has he called for increasing the active-duty roster. And instead of fostering enlistments, Bush's appointees have concentrated on outsourcing more military jobs to private contractors such as Halliburton.

In wartime, virtually all presidents have asked Americans to sacrifice by accepting higher taxes as the price of victory. President Bush has spoken of "sacrifice"—most recently in his televised address to the nation last month. Yet in the face of mounting deficits, predictable costs of a war in Iraq, and a distinct lack of public demand for tax cuts, he reduced taxes anyway—in essence, privatizing resources formerly available for public initiatives.

Past wartime presidents have also tried to unify the nation by taking actions that had broad appeal in the country and bipartisan support in Washington. "Dr. New Deal," Franklin Roosevelt announced in 1943, "has become Dr. Win the War." But instead of pursuing a similarly bipartisan agenda that might have rewarded the public's sudden new faith in the good will and patriotism of its elected officials, Bush decided to try to jam through the same partisan agenda he had before September 11, from tort reform to drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which infuriated the party out of power, brought partisan squabbling back to Washington in record time, and helped re-ignite the public cynicism towards government so pervasive before September 11.

Then there was the war on terror itself. Virtually everyone in Washington, from liberal Democrats to conservative Republicans to the nonpartisan experts at national security agencies, applauded the administration's military strikes against the Taliban government in Afghanistan. But that consensus shattered when the administration decided to make Iraq, a country with no sturdy connection to September 11, the next major target in the war on terrorism. Nor was the bulk of the public behind the effort until the last weeks before the war proper. What polls said the public craved was the support of allies. America had that support at first (recall the headline in *Le Monde* the day after the September 11 attacks: "We are all Americans"). We lost it in the drive to war in Iraq.

America certainly experienced a great surge of renewed patriotic pride when the first "shock and awe" bombs hit Baghdad. People watched TV, flew flags, and prayed for the troops. But as with most modern wars, the invasion of Iraq was, for most of the folks back home, a spectator sport, and by the time it started, most measures of public-spiritedness—confidence in government, faith in fellow Americans, propensity to volunteer—had fallen back to where they were before the terrorist attacks. Only Bush's approval ratings remained high. By last month those too had fallen to pre-September 11 levels as the chaos in Iraq became obvious even as the reasons for war became less so.

Today, about the only measurable changes which pollsters can still establish that September 11 has wrought in public opinion appear in private feelings. A startlingly high number of Americans remain more scared to go into airplanes (43 percent), skyscrapers (30 percent), or crowded, public places (33 percent) than they were before the towers came down.

For a few short months, America felt more united and public-spirited than it had in decades. Those feelings could not have lasted forever, and were never certain to ignite a permanent, generation-wide change in the way Americans relate to their country, like Pearl Harbor did. There are several differences between 1941 and 2001. The war on terror does not require a World War II-magnitude mass mobilization. Nor is America the same country it was 50 years ago. The widespread suggestion that a historic change was afoot may have owed more to a kind of public piety (the hope that the event's importance would be as grand as the trauma) than to the facts. Still, that feeling of common purpose might have been sustained a while longer, with the right policies. But such policies, and the feelings they engender, run counter to the conservative doctrine that animates Washington leaders today. To them, public-spiritedness and unity of purpose are the soil from which big government springs. Better to have Washington divided and the citizenry focused on its private affairs.

And so, two years after al Qaeda killed thousands of us, the sense of unity and public purpose is gone. Half of our combat troops are pinned down, and getting slowly, steadily, picked off, in a country that played no role in September 11. Our allies refuse to come to our aid. Saddam is still at large, and the man who started it all, Osama bin Laden, sends us a taunting video of himself, alive and well, on our day of national mourning. No wonder Americans have crawled back inside their shells. ◆

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Hard Corps

How to end sexual assault at military academies.

By Kirby D. Schroeder

In April, I returned to the rainy Vermont campus of Norwich University, the nation's oldest private military college and birthplace of the R.O.T.C. program, which I'd attended as a cadet nearly three years before. The annual Junior Ring Ceremony was scheduled to take place in two short days, and three years' worth of anticipation was about to be released in a barrage of blank 75mm Pack Howitzer shells, the presentation of a treasure trove of enormous glittering rings, a six-hour dance in Plumely Armory, and by some long-awaited off-campus comradery. The members of the freshman "Rook" platoon with whom I'd shared the first few months of my cadet experience—the two dozen men and women of Golf Company, Second Platoon, Class of 2004—had rented a condo for the weekend in the ski-resort town of Rutland about an hour's drive south of campus—along with several other Norwich platoons. On Saturday night, proudly sporting their new rings and after dancing at the ball, most of the platoon gathered there.

At some point in the night, one of the men from my platoon wandered over to another platoon's condo to hang out. While there, Cadet "Garcia" had been opening various doors, drunkenly searching for a bathroom, when he came across a young woman he didn't recognize, passed out on a bed in the dark, alone. He lay down next to her and started to touch her sexually. As it happened, she was not deeply unconscious—only snoozing—and she woke up to discover that the man accosting her was an intoxicated stranger and not her cadet husband. She called out for her husband who immediately phoned the police, and within an hour the local authorities had arrived to arrest Garcia on a sexual assault charge.

At Norwich, as at any military college, rumors travel faster than a .30 caliber round. Two of my Rook buddies decided to host a "Rookie Meeting" in their room the following night, and called everyone from our platoon on campus to attend. No one missed the meeting who could have been there. About 15 of us assembled in the two-person room, closed the door, and began to talk. It was a sobering conversation; if Garcia's attitudes and behavior towards women had been unique within the platoon, we could simply have condemned him and moved on. But they were not: I had heard cadets tell stories in the past about sex with passed-out or intoxicated women, stories which were meant to be humorous. The men in these incidents may have understood that such behavior was morally suspect, but they certainly wouldn't have called it rape. Faced with Garcia's arrest for an otherwise seemingly trivial act, we started to confront our own complicity. One of the men present had the courage to put it this way: "The fact is, there are probably four of you here that I would trust to be in a room alone with my sister. And I hate that—I *hate* that about us." I could see some of the men glancing around the room as he said this, forming their own short mental tallies of those in whom they would dare place such a trust. We may have all been "buddies," but we also knew that not all our buddies shared the same set of values when it came to sexual decision-making and the understanding of what constitutes a sexual assault.

It would have been too awkward for any of us to have shared the names on our lists with each other, but I like to think my buddies' lists would have included my name. I was a full-time graduate student in the department of sociology at the University of Chicago when, with the support of the Norwich administration and the notification of its Corps of Cadets, I had enrolled as a 30-year-old freshman recruit in the fall of 2000. I was to have the same experiences there as all other cadets while gathering material for my dissertation

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on gender, institutions, and emotion management. The Housing Office found me a compatible 17-year old roommate with whom I would share living space in the barracks. I participated in the Navy R.O.T.C. program and attended undergraduate classes, and on the night of Dec. 11, 2000, I was recognized as a Norwich cadet along with the rest of the Class of 2004 in a ceremony which was genuinely one of the proudest moments of my adult life. As a doctoral student, I was nicknamed "Doc," and I became a part of the corps' social fabric. But like many cadets I also grew deeply ambivalent about Norwich: I loved the corps, but behavior like Garcia's was one of the things I hated also. It was a malignancy within male-cadet identity.

The general public has only recently been made aware of the degree of the sexual-assault problem within military academies, a problem which administrators have been confronting since the academies decided to enroll women in 1976. This past spring, a female cadet at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs told authorities she had been assaulted outside the campus gymnasium. The case was well publicized, and other victims began to come forward; the Air Force Academy is now confronting claims by 61 current and former cadets that they were sexually assaulted while they were enrolled at the school over the past 20 years. The male cadets in these scenarios engaged in sexual blackmail, systematically abused the cadet power structure, and used alcohol to make their victims pass out before taking advantage of them. Air Force officials at the Academy who reviewed these claims ultimately decided that only a slim minority warranted any action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and many of the cases that passed this test resulted in only administrative forms of punishment for the attackers. The charges triggered an investigation by the Department of Defense's Inspector General whose report, issued last month, revealed a gruesome litany of rapes at the academy. Over the last 20 years, the IG found, 12 percent of all female cadets enrolled there had been raped. Worse, the IG's report noted that the Academy's administration had ignored the problems; for the first 20 years of gender integration the Air Force Academy did not even maintain records of reported assaults.

The Air Force Academy scandals have received an extensive public airing, and Sens. Wayne Allard (R-Colo.) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.) have successfully pressed for some reforms, from character development training to improved night-time monitoring of cadet behavior; negligent commanders have already been replaced. These are necessary and positive steps, but by themselves they may still prove inadequate because they miss a crucial point: The real root of the pervasive sexual assault problems of military academies lies not with the administration or with the programs it implements, but within the minds of the cadets themselves.

The military academies have integrated women into their cadet corps, but they have yet to produce a corresponding change in the essential nature of the corps—its values, its ideals, and its behavior. As I saw at Norwich, cadet culture is defined by an amplified masculinity whose more noble values—service to one's country, performance of duty under pressure, and the emphasis of team success over personal achievement—are sometimes offset by chronic patterns of rule-breaking, gratuitous physical abuse, and drinking to the point of self-oblivion. Serious change in the military academies will only be possible when administrators confront that aspect of cadet culture itself which promotes anachronistic ideas of gender-relations and undermines administrative efforts to reform them.

Made to be broken

The freshman year at any military college is designed to be a test of physical, mental, and emotional limits. The Class of 2004 began its freshman year at Norwich by standing in a tense and silent formation on the campus Upper Parade Ground dressed in the mandatory "Rookie storm" uniform: black shoes, tan slacks, white dress t-shirt, black neck tie, and maroon baseball cap embroidered with the word "ROOK" in large gold letters. Soon, AC/DC's "Hell's Bells" began to toll slowly and ominously through the campus loudspeakers. As the 12th toll sounded, the Norwich artillery unit fired a jarring cannon blast that signaled the arrival of a swarm of upperclassmen instructors called "cadre." They poured out of the barracks and began the process of adversative training which would make life in my platoon extremely difficult. The nine men and one woman assigned to train Golf Company became both our deeply respected leaders and our ruthlessly hostile enemies. They put us to bed by kicking our garbage cans into our rooms, and woke us up by pounding on our doors with clenched fists.

The Corps of Cadets at Norwich consists of about 1,000 individuals, approximately 15 percent of them female and virtually all between the ages of 17 and 23. It is overwhelmingly white, though 20 percent of my own platoon was native Spanish speaking. Alcohol consumption was par for the course, though a few members of my own platoon were avowed non-drinkers. The men and women who make up the corps live on the Norwich campus in barracks rooms next to each other, attend academic classes together, and conduct all military training together. Signs on the doors of the latrines warning of a "Class-One Offense" signal the only place where the corps mandates gender segregation, but adherence to even this regulation is sometimes lax. Norwich was the nation's first military school to admit women to its Corps of Cadets, and in '97 became the first to have a female cadet as its Regimental Commander. If there is a vanguard in gender relations among military schools, Norwich is it.

Which is not to say that things at Norwich are gender-neutral or that its women do not feel the strains of tokenism. Male cadets still teach each other by example that it is okay to approach an unconscious, possibly drunk woman and attempt to have sex with her. In this sense, Garcia had been following a script he had come to believe was acceptable. But Garcia was just clumsy enough to pick a married woman and the wife of another cadet as his target. I am certain he thought he had not done anything unusual or wrong until the moment the police arrived and placed him in custody,

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and I can imagine him deeply confused as they escorted him away for committing a sexual assault.

That April, my platoon still had four of its original six women (one woman left at the end of her first week as a recruit, saying that she believed Rookdom would interfere with her ability to perform academically; another left at the end of the first semester citing a number of issues including a damaged ankle). As the details of the assault in Rutland became clear, I wondered what these women might say given the opportunity to address their wayward Rook Brothers. But during the Rookie Meeting, all four of the women carefully kept quiet, and only while thinking about this weeks afterwards did I feel I accurately understood why: military school is not a place that welcomes feminist critiques of inappropriate male behavior. Further, women, by virtue of their gender, are always at risk of becoming labeled as disruptive and confrontational and— even worse— "feminist" if they indicate that they disapprove of the things the men around them do. Instead, they learn to shake their heads in silence because the social costs of speaking up are simply too large: becoming ostracized at military school is a social death sentence for men and women alike. When the *men* start speaking up—when they as a class finally start saying those things which the women cannot—then the climate for change becomes hospitable.

Of course, assaults like those at Norwich and the Air Force Academy are not unique to military schools. Date rape is endemic to colleges of every size and academic purpose, and it frequently goes hand in hand with alcohol: Young men and women get together and drink, inhibitions and good judgment succumb to desire, and seemingly innocent gestures of attraction become grounds for stained reputations and expulsions. What is different in the military school setting, however, is the extent to which such a script is emphasized and validated: Masculinity is often defined in part by sexual performance, and military schools offer young men the opportunity for masculine certification like few other institutions. They officially test military bearing, the limits of strength and speed, the ability to perform under enormous pressure, and skill at concealing emotions (both negative and positive). This package also includes an unofficial emphasis on other, less-savory aspects of masculinity, including demonstrations of heterosexual conquest.

The administration at Norwich fights a steady battle against the behavior of many of its cadets. Despite the severe consequences for possession, the campus floats on a contraband bed of alcohol. Cadets regularly put themselves, their undergraduate careers, and their commissions as officers on the line by indulging in it. For the first "Violation of the Alcohol Policy" (abbreviated "V.A.P." and called "a vap") Norwich cadets are subject to several weeks of close military confinement, loss of all cadet rank, and more than two dozen tours: each tour is one hour of monotonous pacing on the Campus Upper Parade Ground while wearing a class-A uniform and bearing a nine-pound M-14 rifle at right-shoulder arms. If caught twice, a cadet faces dismissal from the school and loss of federal commission. Every year, some cadets take these chances and lose: During my freshman experience, two of the campus' five notorious Command Sergeants Major (the campus' highest ranking juniors and the bulldogs of the corps) were humiliatingly demoted after one such incident, and they were neither the first nor the last cadets demoted that year. The awkwardness of their demotion did more to foster a sense of bitterness between the corps and the administration, however, than it did to affect the consumption of alcohol.

As with alcohol, so with sex: At the end of my first week of freshman training, my cadre explicitly told my platoon that sex between platoon members was a strictly forbidden act, as was sex between freshmen and upperclassmen—within a month, both rules had been broken. The intention of those involved was to circumvent the seemingly frivolous rule, and since cadet life is replete with such rules, cadets quickly become resourceful at circumventing them.

Norwich University maintains on its staff a Title IX coordinator whose full-time job is to monitor and advise the school on its gender environment. However, unlike many members of the administration, the woman who held this position during my tenure as a cadet had never served in the military, did not wear a uniform, was not involved in any of the physical aspects of cadet training, and was manifestly unfamiliar with cadet values and culture. In a setting where symbols of authority have enormous importance, she appeared in the minds of the cadets to lack them all: They were required to listen to her lectures on equal opportunity and gender equality, but did so with low-voiced, mocking incredulity and complete dismissal. Contrast her to another campus figure of that year, the man who headed the Norwich Navy/Marine Corps R.O.T.C. department. This colonel's impeccable uniform, combat service in the Marines, truly superhuman physicality in spite of his near-retirement age, and awe-inspiring presence made him a campus figure of mythical proportions known to the entire corps—he was deeply respected, honored, even feared, and when he spoke cadets would listen with rapt attention. He was the antithesis of the Title IX coordinator.

Eyes wide shut

There are two ways the academies can facilitate changes in cadet culture: They can seek to change the kind of people they choose to admit, and they can try to modify the socialization experience of those who enter. Obviously, arriving at a one-to-one ratio of men to women would have dramatic effects, but the fact is only a small number of women are interested in military education—even at Norwich, with its tradition of progressive attitudes towards women and the 1995 implementation of an innovative recruitment campaign targeted at potential female candidates. Preventative education programs and sexual-assault awareness training can have some impact, but only if handled sensitively and carried out by respected senior officials.

Useful examples from other American institutions that have endured a similarly rough transition away from all-male environments are sparse, in large part because there are few

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other settings like military universities which are so defined by a set of masculine values. Police and fire departments, however, may represent the closest approximations: Their experiences in the 1970s and 1980s, while not promising certain success, suggest why at least some of these institutions have been able to change their cultures while others have not.

One famous example comes from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Despite a 1993 court order to change unprofessional working conditions in the department, four years later the LASD was still found to have done little or nothing to correct them. One of the plaintiff's attorneys in the case even suggested that the order's only effect was to generate increased tension and resentment between male and female officers. Another called the court order an "abysmal failure." Subsequent incidents where female deputies had become the subject of rude jokes and ridicule and had found sex toys and pornographic Polaroids in their patrol cars were clear indications that the underlying masculine culture had not changed. Fire departments around the country have faced similar hurdles, but a study done by the RAND Corporation in 1993 found that the smooth integration of female firefighters depended in large part upon the vocal and public leadership of the department's Chief Officers, and sexual harassment appeared to be more frequent in those departments that had not seen forceful advocacy from their leadership.

While these strategies offer some guidance, however, the solution for military colleges is unlikely to be as intuitive. Certainly the most senior administrators must emphatically and repeatedly tell their cadets that sexual assaults will not be tolerated, and must consistently impose appropriate punishments on offenders, but simply making these penalties more severe may have small effect on the actual problems, though the fair and even evaluation of individual claims of assault would be a start—something which was not practiced in the past by the now-replaced leadership at the Air Force Academy.

Officers and gentlemen

The search for the solution to the problem begins with an understanding of the dual university-leadership structures of adult administrators and the upperclassmen who often wield vast but subtle influence. An important part of the creed of military schools holds that the interaction between more senior and more junior cadets is what models and prepares them for commissioned life in the military, but this relationship also allows cadets to resist administrative efforts to alter the nature of the corps. When the administration tells students that drinking is not permitted, the cadets hear from upperclassmen that there is a long tradition of delicately circumventing this particular rule; when the administration tells students that sexual assault is unacceptable, they hear from juniors and seniors that having sex with passed-out girls is actually okay. In both of these cases the cadets often adopt, through a simple logic, older peers rather than administrators as the acceptable model for their own understanding of what it means to be a cadet.

Exclusive administrative use of new carrot-and-stick strategies to change such behaviors from the top down is likely to lead to a dead end. Educational seminars and training sessions designed to initiate changes in behavior from the bottom up will hit resistance from a cadet culture which has its own deeply held masculine values and an established and efficient system for transmitting them. The objective needs to be to turn cadets into gentlemen—gentlemen who do not engage in blind inebriation as a form of entertainment and who do not consider women to be objects of male sexual convenience. But while cadets may often ignore those regulations which conflict with the extant masculine value system, they also regularly adopt formally prescribed yet functionally useless behaviors of cadet life with enthusiasm. One of these prescriptions is actually a ritualistic *pro*-scription involving some red bricks.

Set flush into the ground directly in front of the entrance to the 1993 Kreitzberg Library on the Norwich campus is a small collection of red bricks arranged in a square. During Rook Week, the cadre of each freshman platoon bring their charges to these bricks and explain that they are all that is left of the Old South Barracks. The cadre also explain that no cadet entering or leaving the library ever deliberately steps on these bricks, and if one watches cadets leave or enter the library at any hour of the day or night, in a group or alone, Norwich cadets always step around the bricks. There are no consequences for failing to do so, no regulation protecting the bricks, and a cadet whose foot slips is unlikely to be chastised by his peers. All that protects the bricks is the fact that Norwich cadets are not supposed to step on them—and the behavior is self-reinforcing because it has become part of the definition of what it means to be a cadet at Norwich.

Respect for bricks is not the same as respect for women or respect for sexual boundaries, but the behavior suggests a crucial transferability. If the definition of a cadet can be remade to actually include such values rather than merely to render them lip service, then the incidence of sexual assault in military schools can only go down.

On the Monday after the Junior Ring Ball, I packed my bags and got ready to leave Norwich. While my two Rook buddies were in class, I combed the room for stray clothing and misplaced toiletries. As I did this, I suddenly realized that the decor of the room had experienced a small but critical change— a change that forced me to smile amidst all the weekend's sadness and drama. And as I left the room, I felt a renewed sense of hope, an unanticipated confirmation that the Norwich Corps of Cadets is still worth loving in spite of its many problems, that regardless all of the machismo, the men of my platoon— many of whom will become U.S. officers within the next year—are fully capable of introspection and change with respect to how they view women. And all I could think as I walked to my car was, *He figured it out! He actually figured it out!* Sometime earlier in the day, in my absence and with no encouragement from me, one of my buddies had taken down the picture of the woman in uniform and lingerie which had been taped to his wall locker, and had replaced it with a picture of his swim team. ◆

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Malpractice Makes Perfect

How the GOP milks a phony doctors' insurance crisis.

By Stephanie Mencimer

When he went out on strike last January, Dr. Robert Zaleski had his 15 minutes of fame. The Wheeling, W. Va., orthopedic surgeon was one of two dozen surgeons to walk off the job in January to protest his state's high costs of malpractice insurance. Arguing that "frivolous lawsuits" were driving up insurance premiums and forcing physicians to leave the state, Zaleski and his colleagues threatened to stay out for 30 days unless the legislature passed a bill that would cap non-economic damages in such suits at $250,000. As the walkout turned into a national story, Zaleski became one of its most visible faces, making the rounds of TV news shows and telling CNN, "I would certainly jump in front of a bus if I could to continue to serve my patients as I have for 23 years." Just a few weeks later, Zaleski's mug shot appeared with those of five other doctors in *The New York Times Magazine*, where he claimed to be "on the brink" of moving out of state because of high insurance rates and lawsuits.

Zaleski and his colleagues are the leading edge of a much broader movement. All across the country, doctors like him are telling reporters, legislators, and even their patients that frivolous lawsuits are driving up insurance costs and driving doctors out of practice and out of state, threatening access to care. They've mobilized around state legislation to limit malpractice lawsuits and linked arms with President Bush and Republicans in Congress who have been pushing similar bills in Washington. Indeed, Zaleski himself was even personally invited to attend a speech President Bush delivered in Scranton, Pa., where he railed against the threat to patient care posed by out-of-control lawsuits.

Upon closer inspection, however, it appears that Zaleski may be more a source of the problem than a victim of it. Between 1987 and 2002, according to the West Virginia Board of Medicine, patients filed 14 lawsuits against Zaleski, eight of which resulted in payouts that together came to $1.7 million. By contrast, according to a Public Citizen study, only 1 percent of the state's doctors made five or more malpractice payouts over the past decade. And while Zaleski says the settlement figures are misleading because they also include defense costs, his record is hardly squeaky clean. In a 1985 lawsuit (one not among the 14 reported to the Board of Medicine), he admitted in a deposition to being addicted to prescription painkillers for a substantial part of the time that he was operating on people in the early 1980s. Not only was he a drug addict, but to maintain his Percodan habit, Zaleski allegedly wrote prescriptions for other local addicts, who filled them and kicked back some pills to the doctor, according to court documents that include copies of the prescriptions and depositions from some of the addicts.

Yet even though a suspicious police officer reported him

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to the state medical board, Zaleski was never disciplined by his fellow physicians. (He says he does not remember the specifics of the case, and while he acknowledges a past substance-abuse problem, insists that he has been clean and sober for 21 years.) Given this history, the real scandal may not be how high Zaleski's insurance premiums are, but the fact that he can get insurance at all.

Zaleski's malpractice record may have been extreme, but it was not unusual among the doctors who walked out of West Virginia hospitals in January. According to a *Charleston Gazette* report, nine of the 18 doctors striking at Wheeling Hospital, including Zaleski, had cost their insurers more than $6 million in malpractice settlements and judgments. At least some of the suits don't seem to merit the adjective "frivolous." In one case, a doctor had left a clip on an artery, eventually forcing the patient to have a liver transplant. In another, a surgeon cut into his patient's stomach wall during surgery, causing a massive, fatal infection. Indeed, a number of those doctors leading the protest movement include former drug addicts, felons, doctors whose licenses have been revoked, and many, many others who get sued a lot—and far more than most of their colleagues.

Not all the physicians angry about malpractice lawsuits and high insurance rates have such checkered histories as Dr. Zaleski. Many ethical and responsible doctors say the system invites frivolous litigation, subjecting them to considerable hassle and anxiety. One result, they argue, is an increase in "defensive medicine"—when doctors schedule too many tests, just to be safe—which contributes to higher health care costs for everybody. But even the respected General Accounting Office (GAO) has recently concluded that there's little evidence to back the striking doctors' main claim, which is that lawsuits are forcing many of them to abandon the practice of medicine or to avoid high-risk procedures. And while there's no doubt that malpractice insurance is getting more expensive across the board—about 30 to 40 percent, on average, during the last three years—this increase is largely due to the ailing stock market and poor business practices in a virtually unregulated industry. As a result, there's no reason to think that capping jury awards would bring premiums down, a fact the insurance industry itself acknowledges. Robert E. White Jr., president of First Professional Insurance Company, the leading medical malpractice insurer in Florida, told the *Palm Beach Post* in January, "No responsible insurer can cut its rates after a [medical malpractice] bill passes." The one surefire way to bring down the number of big-payout lawsuits is to reduce the number of those doctors who inspire most of them. But state medical boards—which are run by doctors—have been notoriously reluctant to aggressively police their own.

The doctors' protests aren't about good policy. They're about good politics. Although the malpractice strikes look like a natural outgrowth of physician frustration, they are, in fact, the product of a sophisticated lobbying campaign coordinated by Republican operatives and underwritten by business groups with little interest in the practice of medicine. GOP leaders view malpractice lawsuits as a pivotal issue for the 2004 campaign. With health-care costs skyrocketing on its watch, the GOP is eager to shift blame onto the Democrats, who have long enjoyed greater public trust on the issue. And doctors, who enjoy great credibility among voters, are the key. By linking rising health-care costs to frivolous medical lawsuits, Republicans can use doctors as a cudgel against trial lawyers, the Democratic Party's second-largest funding base and one which could be paralyzed by lawsuit caps. Once bills to restrict malpractice lawsuits are on the table—in Congress and in the state legislatures—Republicans can slip in much broader legal relief for corporations under the guise of bringing down health-care costs, especially for senior citizens. Frank Galitski, a former Bush campaign staffer who works with the doctors as head of the Texas Alliance for Patient Access (TAPA), a coalition of insurance companies and health-care corporations, puts it bluntly: "This is a great issue for the president, particularly in the key battleground states of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, where they have an aging population." Indeed, if the experience in West Virginia is any indication, the GOP has found itself a winning formula.

The perfect storm

The doctors who walked off the job last January were primarily from the Wheeling and Weirton areas of West Virginia, right in the heart of steel country and on the borders of Ohio and Pennsylvania—the only solidly Republican section of historically Democratic West Virginia. Nestled in the Ohio Valley, Wheeling is a relic of the Industrial Revolution. Once home to a bustling steel, glass and even tobacco industry, the area today offers a rusting landscape of smokestacks and the dying steel mills which are an endangered species in America. Downtown Wheeling is nearly deserted, its once grand Victorian architecture blackened from years of neglect. A "Coffee Shop" on the main drag is actually a video poker hall with a single coffee pot to provide an occasional pick-up to the pasty, overweight gamblers glued to video poker machines and smoking cigarettes in dark rooms.

Like much of West Virginia, Wheeling and the surrounding Ohio County rank among the poorest places in the country. Thanks to the closing of the steel mills, Ohio County has lost 30 percent of its population since 1968, leaving it with one of the oldest populations of any county in the country. Today's residents are thus heavily dependent on the local hospitals, which also happen to be the area's largest employers. Wheeling Hospital, where most of the doctors went on strike, employs some 3,000 local residents.

Thanks to the health-care-based economy, doctors make up the area's upper crust, and their patients are mostly poor folks reliant upon government health-care programs like Medicaid and Medicare. As trial lawyers are quick to point out, with its high rates of poverty and uninsured residents—as many as one in five—Wheeling is not exactly a magnet for medical talent, especially because it must compete with the highly-acclaimed University of Pittsburgh Medical Center only 60 miles away.

As a result, many of West Virginia's striking doctors were

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foreign-born and -trained, and even some of the native doctors were trained in places like Guadalajara, Mexico. At the same time, Ohio County has an unusually active and talented trial bar, lawyers who honed their skills through decades spent suing coal companies for workers' cases of black lung. The tension between the two groups has been brewing for years, and by 2001, when malpractice insurance companies imposed stiff premium increases on doctors, conditions were ripe for the perfect storm.

The recent physician walkouts protesting malpractice insurance hikes would never have proved so effective had the media taken a closer look at the doctors involved—and the interests backing them.

While the jury verdicts aren't nearly as outrageous as the doctors make them out to be, there have been a few whoppers in Ohio County—albeit usually in cases involving egregious malpractice—and these seem to be what really riled the doctors. The case that really sticks in their craw is that of Dr. Fred Payne. Like his colleague Robert Zaleski, Payne had been sued a dozen times over the past decade, and had paid out settlements of at least $7.3 million, according to the *Charleston Gazette*. In 1998, Payne operated to repair a minor spine injury on a spry 76-year-old World War II veteran who had fallen out of a tree. On his way to the operating room, he ran into a medical-equipment salesman who encouraged him to try out a new type of clamp. The patient hadn't consented to the procedure, nor had Payne ever even seen the tool used or studied its use; but he tried it out anyway. After Payne left the hospital, a nurse paged him to let him know that the patient wasn't doing well in recovery. An examination found that the clamp had slipped into the spinal canal and paralyzed the man from the neck down—a hideously worse injury than he had initially sustained. He died a year later. A lawsuit over the case, which charged that the man didn't even need surgery in the first place, was settled for $4.6 million.

The Ohio Valley Medical Center agreed to pay $3.5 million of the settlement, but insisted that Payne was responsible for the rest. But Payne's minimal insurance didn't cover the balance, so the judge on the case, Fred Risovich II, insisted that he use his personal assets to pay his share of the settlement, a rare move in a malpractice case. "The negligence was so gross, and the injury so bad that justice required that he pay something," says Risovich. Payne has not practiced medicine since.

Doctors in Wheeling had not been particularly politically active before this, but they were outraged by the case—not by Payne's behavior, but by Risovich's. The doctors organized to oust him in a nasty campaign that would foreshadow the tenor of the battle over malpractice suit caps two years later. According to Risovich and people in the local medical community, during the 2000 judicial race, anonymous flyers appeared on the windshields of cars at the local supermarket, accusing Risovich of beating his wife and being a racist. Risovich says one night someone set fire to his campaign materials in his front yard and urinated on his stoop. "Someone sent investigators to call my children at college, asked my stepchildren if they'd ever been molested. It was horrible," says Risovich. Dozens of Republican physicians changed their party affiliation so they could vote against Risovich in the Democratic primary, and many today take credit for his crushing defeat.

Claim adjustment

Just as the doctors were becoming politically energized, the malpractice insurance industry went into a financial tailspin. St. Paul Companies, once the nation's largest malpractice insurance firm, pulled out of West Virginia and other states in 2001, leaving 1,000 West Virginia doctors without insurance. Doctors in Charleston—apparently not averse to lawsuits when these suit their own purposes—filed a class action against the company, alleging that St. Paul stiffed the doctors after pursuing a business strategy designed to enrich top executives with more than $45 million in bonuses, salaries, and stock options. The suit alleged that St. Paul raided $1.1 billion in reserved doctors' premiums to artificially inflate its earnings in 1999 and 2000, a move that helped executives to $5.2 million in bonuses and increased the value of their stock options to $28 million.

Despite evidence of insurance company shenanigans, though, doctors put the blame for their insurance woes on trial lawyers, malpractice suits, and juries. They had some help in staying focused: Between 1995 and 2001, Medical Assurance, a large company which provided medical malpractice insurance to doctors to cover their legal costs and damages in lawsuits, paid the state medical association at least $115,000 to lobby on the company's behalf, according to a story in the *Charleston Gazette* by Lawrence Messina. Medical Assurance offered members breaks on their insurance premiums for attending "White Coat Day" at the legislature and provided the glossy brochures and information on "meritless lawsuits" and "outrageous" damage awards that doctors used in their talking points with reporters and elected officials.

Similarly, the PR materials on "lawsuit abuse" and patient petitions that began to fill doctors' offices last year came from the West Virginia Care Coalition; the coalition was actually a project of Maple Creative, a Charleston-based PR firm with close ties to the Bush administration. Those groups footing the bill for Maple's services included, not surprisingly, several with a direct stake in medical issues. The state HMO association and the local hospital association, according to Wheeling Hospital CEO Donald Hofreuder, gave the

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Care Coalition more than $200,000. But other business groups with a broader agenda of lawsuit restrictions also pitched in, including the West Virginia Oil and Gas Coalition, the state chambers of commerce, the West Virginia Building and Industry Coalition and the Business Roundtable.

Once corralled behind malpractice caps, doctors came up with their own innovations. At one point, physicians in Wheeling began adding a "tax" to their bills, $5 or $10 above and beyond what insurance would pay for, telling patients it was intended to cover their outrageous malpractice insurance premiums. Predictably, older people on fixed incomes were outraged and flooded their elected officials with calls for lawsuit restrictions.

All in all, claims about a "lawsuit abuse crisis" proved remarkably effective in West Virginia—and resistant to contradictory evidence. In February 2001, responding to the doctors' allegations, the *Charleston Gazette* undertook a computer-assisted analysis of more than 2,000 medical malpractice claims reported to the West Virginia Board of Medicine. The paper determined that far from being in a state of crisis, West Virginia ranked 35th in the country for median malpractice payouts. The paper also found that both the number of malpractice claims and the dollar amounts of the settlements and verdicts had actually declined between 1993 and 2001. Nor was West Virginia suffering under an epidemic of "disappearing doctors." Last August, the *Gazette*'s Messina attended a rally at which the West Virginia medical society set out 37 empty chairs labeled with the names of local doctors who supposedly had been forced out of practice because of insurance costs. He discovered that at least two of the doctors named were indeed not practicing—because they were dead. Another two were still actually treating Wheeling patients. A Public Citizen study of the state medical board records later found that the number of doctors in West Virginia increased by more than 350 between 1997 and 2002.

This fall, the GAO reached a similar conclusion: of five states identified by the American Medical Association (AMA) as malpractice "crisis" states, including West Virginia, it found that "many of the reported provider actions taken in response to malpractice pressures were not substantiated or did not widely affect access to health care . . . some reports of physicians relocating to other states, retiring, or closing practices were not accurate or involved relatively few physicians." Nor, in those same states, could the GAO "identify any major reductions in the utilization of certain services some physicians reported reducing because they consider the services to be high risk."

Lawyers' trial

As doctors and insurance companies in West Virginia mobilized to impose caps, Republicans in Washington began to ramp up their own campaign for lawsuit restrictions. In July of last year, the Bush administration kicked off the effort with the release of a report called, "Confronting the New Health Care Crisis: Improving Health Care Quality and Lowering Costs by Fixing Our Medical Liability System," which claimed that the "critical element" for expanding health insurance to uninsured Americans was "curbing excessive litigation." Soon after, in mid-July, congressional Republicans launched a hearing titled "Harming Patient Access to Care: The Impact of Excessive Litigation." The supposed travails of West Virginia doctors made a perfect case study. Rep. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), a close confidant of White House adviser Karl Rove, personally escorted a West Virginia doctor named Dr. Samuel Roberts to the House floor to testify. Roberts, one of only three doctors who testified, told the committee that he could not afford the insurance to continue delivering babies, and claimed that this year, "I will have to stop, leaving seven counties around me with no family physician delivering prenatal or maternity care."

As with so much of the malpractice campaign, Roberts's testimony omitted some critical facts that might have explained some of his insurance woes: In 1987, he pleaded guilty to five counts of cocaine possession and was sentenced to five years probation, according to the *Charleston Gazette*. In response, the state suspended his medical license for a year, though it later reduced the penalty to five years of supervised probation. (Incidentally, a year after his dire warnings to Congress, Roberts is today still delivering babies, according to his office.)

Nonetheless, the campaign gained steam, and in July 2002, Bush gave a major speech on medical malpractice in North Carolina, home state of trial lawyer and Democratic presidential hopeful John Edwards. "Healthcare costs are up because docs are worried about getting sued," the president declared. Before the speech, Bush met privately with AMA president-elect Donald Palmisano, who told *The Wall Street Journal* that Bush had counseled him to "get out the grassroots" if he wanted caps on malpractice damages. The West Virginia doctors took his advice. When they staged their strike in January, it coincided perfectly with Bush's State of the Union address, in which he raised the malpractice issue before a national TV audience.

The West Virginia strike did inconvenience a few patients, but its real sting was felt—as intended—at the statehouse. Joe DeLong, a delegate from Weirton—where some of the surgeons walked out—views the doctors' strike as a form of extortion. "When I grew up, a strike was a sacrifice," he says. "The doctors' livelihoods were never at stake. This was a movement to inflict pain on the sick and the elderly." He recalls being flooded with calls, including one from a 96-year-old woman in tears because she was dependent on a state transportation program to get to her doctors. The shuttle wouldn't cross state lines to take her to Pennsylvania or Ohio if doctors in West Virginia quit practicing; she only calmed down when DeLong offered to drive her should it prove necessary.

Such calls sent the legislature into a frenzy. "It's an emotional issue for them," DeLong says, noting that the doctors have done a good job of turning their insurance problems into an anti-lawyer issue. Aside from the trial lawyers, there

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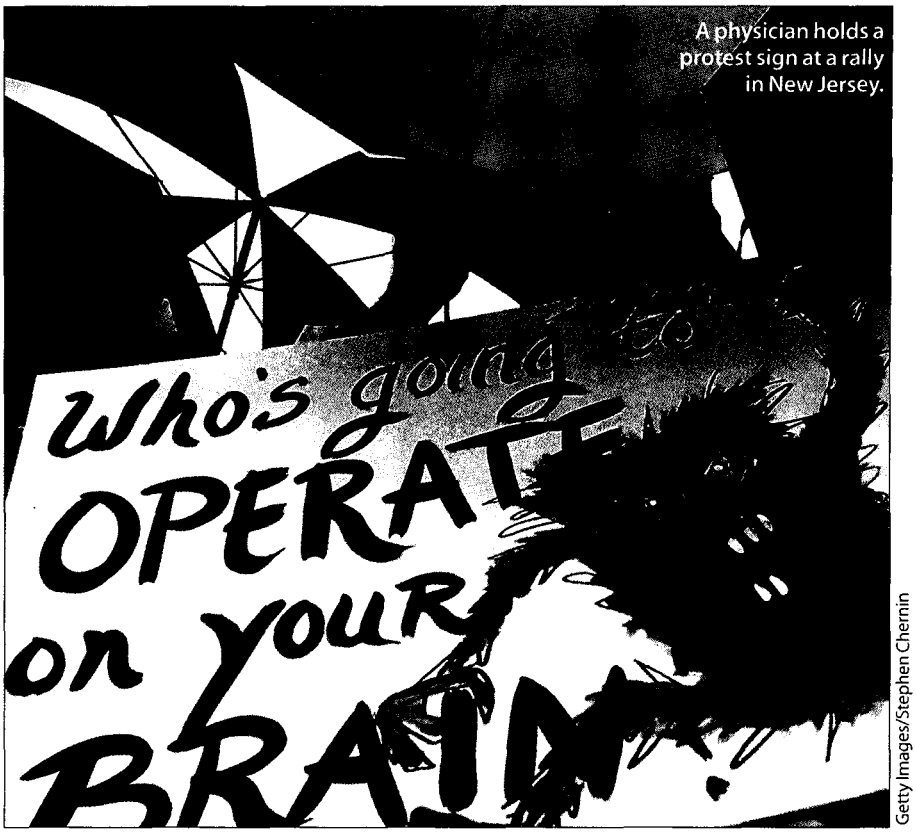
has been very little organized opposition on the other side. In March, state legislators, most of them Democratic, voted overwhelmingly in favor of a sweeping malpractice bill. (DeLong was among them.) Gov. Bob Wise practically begged to sign it.

Thanks in part to the ripple effect of the West Virginia strike, the national campaign by protesting doctors has been a smashing success. In state after state, doctors have had only to threaten walkouts to win promises of damage caps from local legislators. Shortly after the West Virginia doctors went on strike, for instance, doctors in Scranton, Pa., sat down to talk strategy with Frank Galitski, the former Bush campaign worker—who admits that "there is some coordination" between the doctors' protests and the White House. Which makes sense: At the national level, Republican-led efforts to impose restrictions on medical malpractice lawsuits have helped unite otherwise disparate elements of the health-care industry behind a broader effort for lawsuit restrictions. A malpractice bill passed by the House in March with backing from the AMA, for instance, would completely exempt not just doctors but also drug companies, medical-device manufacturers, nursing-home operators, and HMOs from punitive damage awards for reckless conduct. The Senate just rejected a similar measure, but the GOP plans to use the issue during next year's election—and for good reason. Limits on malpractice suits have proved to be a powerful inducement to the medical community at a time when frustration with managed care has been alienating this once-reliably Republican constituency. (Lawsuit-prone doctors like Zaleski have proven especially eager to lead the crusade against trial lawyers.) After the West Virginia success, the AMA pledged to spend a whopping $22 million this year on the malpractice issue alone, establishing a nationwide, state-level grassroots operation that will come in handy during the 2004 election—a figure nearly eight times larger than the entire budget of the Association of the Trial Lawyers of America. And so far this year, Bush's reelection campaign has netted more than $750,000 from doctors.



A physician holds a protest sign at a rally in New Jersey.

Getty Images/Stephen Chernin

Error reports

It's worth noting that the walkouts would never have proved so effective had the media taken a closer look at the doctors involved—and the interests backing them. Aside from a few skeptical reporters in West Virginia, most of the press has taken the doctors' claims at face value, rarely challenging their evidence and anecdotes. In June, for instance, *Time* magazine devoted an entire cover story to "disappearing doctors," complete with data supplied by the AMA—the same data that previously had been challenged by consumer groups around the country and later was authoritatively debunked by the GAO. Reporters have also abetted the campaign by portraying wealthy doctors as the impoverished victims of "lawsuit abuse" and the often poor and injured plaintiffs as the greedy pawns of billionaire trial lawyers. Yet as with the AMA's data, that image doesn't hold up under inspection.

Take Dr. Rajai Khoury, a striking Wheeling cardiovascular surgeon who told a local TV news interviewer in January, "We're hurting, our patients are hurting, the community is suffering." It's no secret in Wheeling that Khoury recently built a 12,000-foot mansion with a five-car garage, a pool, and a lovely view of the countryside from "Pill Hill," the ritzy neighborhood that's home to many doctors. (According to county building records, the house is valued at close to $3 million, in a town where houses go for as little as $19,000.) Even Zaleski seems to be doing pretty well, despite his claims on television. He says his malpractice insurance of $150,000 a year is about 30 percent of his income, which would net him $300,000 annually. "I'm not starving," he admits.

Dr. Greg Saracco, the telegenic surgeon who became the unofficial spokesman for the Wheeling walkout, defends his profession, saying, "I don't think it's really an issue how much a doctor makes. Who says we have to do this for free?" In an

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interview, Saracco rails against the "outrageous jury awards" given in Wheeling, offering the story of a local man who violated company rules and safety guidelines on the job and used a broomstick to unstick some kind of machine, which then cut his arm off. Saracco says the man then sued the company for safety violations, and a jury awarded him $4 million for his stupidity.

"Is somebody's arm worth $4 million?" he says with amazement. Alas, the story may be apocryphal, as many "frivolous lawsuit" stories often are. Verdicts over $1 million are rare in West Virginia (there were none last year), and none of the trial lawyers I spoke with in Wheeling could recall such a case. They suggest Saracco may be confusing it with a similar case—lost leg, not arm—but the suit was against an insurance company, a very different issue.

When asked whether he's ever been sued, Saracco says he just settled a "crappola" suit for $25,000. In that "crappola" suit, James Westfall, a man in his mid-50s, came into the hospital for a hernia repair surgery, performed by Saracco and his partner, Dr. Robert Cross. According to the lawsuit, during surgery, Saracco pierced Westfall's bowel while stitching him up and sewed it into his abdomen. The wound closure later tore and created a hole in Westfall's bowel, causing it to leak. Cross failed to respond to nurses' reports of complications until Westfall was in critical condition—too late, as it turned out. Westfall died a miserable death two days later. The lawsuit was ultimately settled with Cross and the hospital for well over a million dollars.

Bad medicine

Saracco suggests that most of the people who suffer from "malpractice" usually have themselves to blame, like obese people and the smokers he says are getting money from asbestos lawsuits. The solution, he insists, is a cap on jury awards like the one passed in California during the '70s—the law all the doctors' talking points refer to as proof of the efficacy of such caps. But Saracco and his fellow physicians have a short memory. California passed its law in 1976, after malpractice insurers, blaming out-of-control lawsuits, suddenly hiked doctors' premiums by more than 300 percent in a single year. Some years after the law took effect, insurance premiums had shown no sign of going down. California doctors ended up suing Travelers' Insurance Co., alleging that it grossly overcharged in the name of a non-existent malpractice crisis. (Here, too, the plantiff's bar came in handy: A trial lawyer won the doctors a $50 million refund.) The state ultimately passed strict insurance reform that kept a lid on future premium increases.

Pillboxed In

By Alicia Mundy

Alan Cropsey should be a trial lawyer's worst nightmare. A former schoolteacher and current state senator in Michigan, Cropsey is a devout evangelical Christian and conservative Republican who doesn't drink, doesn't smoke, and doesn't lose elections. In his 25-year career, he's done two separate stints in both chambers of the state legislature, hung out his shingle in private practice, and was Michigan field director for the Republican Majority Issues Committee, a PAC affiliated with Rep. Tom DeLay (R-Texas). "I'm driven," he says, "by moral principles." Consistently anti-abortion and pro-gun, Cropsey was also a vigorous proponent during the 1980s of so-called "tort reform," or legislation to limit lawsuits against business.

Today, however, Cropsey considers the tort reform movement "misguided." What helped convert him was a decision made last March by the Michigan Supreme Court to throw out lawsuits from female victims of the drug fen-phen, a once-popular weight-loss aid blamed for hundreds of deaths in the mid-1990s. Many of the women have pulmonary hypertension, the usually-fatal lung disease linked to Pondimin, the "fen" in fen-phen. Yet despite indications that Wyeth, the manufacturer of Pondimin, had sat on knowledge of the drug's dangers while the U.S. Food and Drug Administration was reviewing it, the court ruled that the company could not be sued. Why? Under a 1995 law pushed by then-Gov. John Engler and backed by a well-funded array of business groups and conservative activists, if a drug had been approved by the FDA, its manufacturer cannot be sued in Michigan for any harm it may cause—even if the manufacturer knew in advance of potential hazards. Cropsey calls the law "horrible," saying his opposition is "a matter of moral principle." The women, he argues, "are being denied justice."

In fact, similar "shield laws" exist in Utah, New Jersey, Oregon, Colorado, and Arizona, while several other states, including Ohio, are considering their own version—thanks to a sophisticated squeeze play by pharmaceutical lobbyists and tort-reform activists. On one side, they've been pushed to defang the FDA: In 1994, after complaining about the spiraling costs involved in getting a drug approved by the agency, pharmaceutical companies convinced Congress to pass legislation forcing the FDA to approve drugs more quickly. The legislation has enabled some groundbreaking new drugs, including some life-saving new AIDS medications, to get on the market faster. But the changes have also resulted in the FDA overruling doctors who have legitimate concerns about safety. According to a 1998 survey by Public Citizen, for example, at least 27 drugs were approved during the late 1990s over the objections of the FDA's safety reviewers. Ten of them have been withdrawn from the market since Michigan's FDA shield law went into effect, including the diabetes drug Rezulin; the heartburn drug Propulsid; the painkiller Duract; and the anti-cholesterol drug Baycol. Yet even as drug industry lobbyists continue to push for further weakening of the FDA approval process, industry funded tort-reform activists have worked to convince state legislatures that drug companies shouldn't be held accountable when those changes result in drugs that kill people. In Cropsey's view, Michigan's shield law is the functional equivalent of welfare without work requirements. "It's a way of protecting companies from their own behavior," Cropsey says. "If welfare mothers have to pay for their behavior and their mistakes, why shouldn't large corporations that knowingly sell

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There are, however, other solutions that might help reduce insurance rates that Saracco and his colleagues never mention. Studies have repeatedly shown that only 5 percent of the nation's doctors are responsible for more than half of all malpractice payouts. Yet those lawsuit-magnet practitioners generally pay the same insurance rates as doctors who've never been sued, the equivalent of giving drunks the same car insurance rates as soccer moms with perfect driving records. This practice exists among malpractice insurers partly because many of them are owned by doctors themselves, but mostly because they make their money on investments, not on claims management. As a result, the insurers have an incentive to sign up as many doctors as possible so they can invest their premiums in the stock market—a strategy which ensured that, when the economy went south they would have to begin hiking premiums sharply. The use of experience rating, like that employed by auto insurers to weed out the dangerous drivers, would reward better doctors and price those who attract the most lawsuits out of business rather than subsidizing them.

Better regulation of health care would likely reduce the number of malpractice lawsuits simply by reducing the number of medical injuries. In 1999, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) reported that preventable medical errors kill as many as 100,000 people a year—and cause a tremendous number of lawsuits. The IOM recommended a national mandatory public error-reporting system, along with stronger requirements that doctors regularly upgrade their skills as a condition of maintaining their licenses. Error reporting would allow better data-mining that, in turn, would help the health-care industry combat mistakes more systematically by detecting problem areas and suggesting remedies. Research has already shown that surgeons who do a large volume of high-risk procedures such as bypass or delicate spine surgery make the fewest mistakes, since practice makes perfect. That's why the IOM also has recommended that such procedures be restricted only to experienced doctors at high-volume specialty facilities rather than letting any neurosurgeon in Wheeling, W. Va., try his hand at it now and then.

Yet striking doctors aren't advocating any of these proposals: Their organizational lobbyists have indeed vigorously fought such measures, even simple protocols such as marking surgical sites with a pen to avoid, say, amputating the wrong foot, as did a doctor in Florida in 1995. These days, the only solution that doctors seem to offer for any of the nation's myriad health care problems is limiting the patients' right to sue. And the Bush administration is just fine with that. ◆

deadly drugs?"

The fight over Redux, a diet drug almost identical to Pondimin, is a case in point. Internal Wyeth documents show that while Redux was undergoing FDA review during the mid-1990s, cases of pulmonary hypertension linked to the drug were skyrocketing in Europe. Intent on moving Redux into the lucrative U.S. market, Wyeth downplayed evidence that might have given FDA examiners second thoughts. (By early 1996, for instance, Wyeth was already maintaining an internal pulmonary hypertension "death listing report," suggesting it was aware of problems with the drug.) It took an unprecedented two meetings of the FDA's advisory committee for the drug to finally be approved, and even then, in April 1996, the senior doctor in charge of reviewing Redux refused to sign the approval letter.

A year and a half later, after the Mayo Clinic publicly reported that some of its patients taking the drug had required heart surgery, Wyeth "voluntarily" withdrew Redux—which did not deter its lawyers from arguing in the Michigan lawsuit that, since the drug was still technically approved by the FDA, the victims should not be able to sue. The court agreed. And users of Rezulin, Baycol, Propulsid, Duract, and several drugs linked to hundreds of deaths before the drugs were "voluntarily" withdrawn by their manufacturers will likely encounter the same obstacle in states with shield laws. Moreover, thanks to a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 2001, no one can sue a drug maker for fraud against the FDA unless the FDA itself does (which the agency appears disinclined to do, especially under a pro-business Republican administration). Michigan's law does make an exception in cases where plaintiffs can prove that the FDA would not have approved the drug had it known the scope of the danger beforehand. But that's proven a very tough standard to meet since, as Jane Bailey, head of the Michigan Trial Lawyers Association, puts it, the FDA "will never let one of its doctors testify about whether or not it would have approved a drug."

Cropsey, who calls Michigan's shield law a "get-out-of-jail-free card," would like to junk it entirely. But given the forces aligned against him, for now he's pushing for smaller changes. One possible amendment would revive a loophole deleted from the original bill in 1995, allowing lawsuits in cases where a drug company knowingly hid information from the FDA about a product's possible effects. Another amendment would allow lawsuits in cases where a drug was approved by FDA administrators over the objections of FDA safety reviewers, as was the case with Redux. "People are starting to realize that this law protects corporations—but it hurts consumers," says Michigan state Rep. Alexander Lipsey, who sits on the House Judiciary Committee.

But while Cropsey and his allies try to fix Michigan's law, business groups are working to get versions of it passed in other states. The American Tort Reform Association (ATRA), a key force behind the new state laws, cites 20 states as considering either shield laws or caps on verdicts against drug manufacturers. And just in case gaming the FDA and blocking state-level lawsuits don't do the trick, the pharmaceutical industry is going after Congress. Last year's Republican-inspired legislation to limit damages in medical malpractice lawsuits also included, not coincidentally, provisions designed to shield drug companies from such actions. That legislation failed, but the GOP is widely expected to revive it during next year's election campaign. Says Cropsey, "They are using the doctors' crises with malpractice insurance to hide a blanket protection of the drug industry."

Alicia Mundy, author of *Dispensing With the Truth*, a book about the battle over Fen-Phen, is a senior editor at *Cableworld*.

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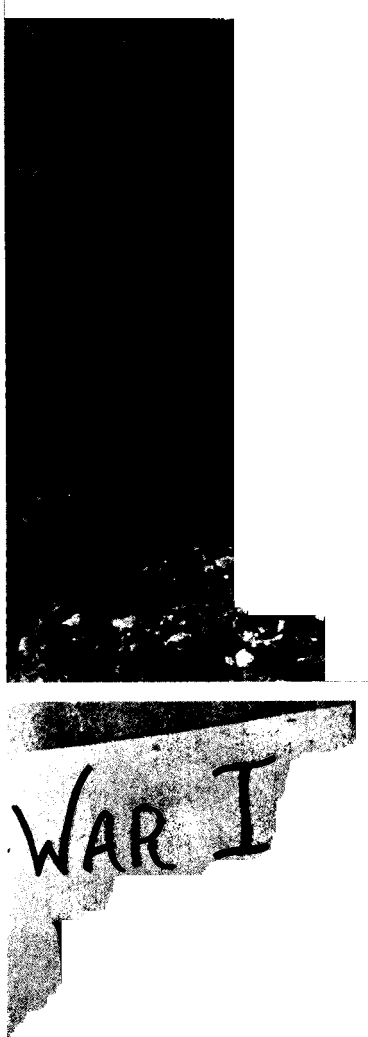
Prisoner's Dilemma

How '60s anti-war activists let today's chicken hawks off the hook. A draft-resister's story.



By Robert Poe

On the surface, the war with Iraq seems a simple case of hypocrisy gone lethal. With few exceptions, those in and around the White House who beat the drum most loudly for the invasion of Iraq had not seen a day of combat in their lives. Some, like Vice President Dick Cheney, avoided the Vietnam draft with college deferments; others, like President George Bush, served out their time in safe, hard-to-acquire berths in the National Guard; and the number of medical deferments awarded to now-vigorous conservative leaders is suspiciously high. Meanwhile, many top officials who had seen combat, including senior uniformed officers at the Pentagon and retired soldiers like Secretary of State Colin Powell and Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.), were dubious about the administration's choice to attack Iraq as the next move in the war on terror. Even those who came around to support the invasion openly worried about the best-case scenario "plans" for post-Saddam Iraq made by civilians at the Pentagon, few of whom had ever worn the uniform. These concerns proved valid.

PHOTOS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A U.S. Marine carrying a wounded comrade in Iraq; President Bush declaring the end of major combat in Iraq; American soldiers taking cover in a trench in Vietnam; a demonstrator against the Vietnam War. *Getty Images*

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In the months since May 1, when the president donned an aviator's jumpsuit, landed on an aircraft carrier, and declared the end of major combat, more than 155 American soldiers have died in Iraq. The number of wounded has skyrocketed to over 1,000, up 35 percent in August alone, according to *The Washington Post*. Exhausted, middle-aged reservists have had their tours of duty lengthened. And the administration has had to go back to the United Nations for a mandate to spur the international community to bail out the United States with additional troops and resources.

Soldiers are rightly proud of what they have accomplished so far in Iraq, and understandably irritated at the press for only focusing on the negative. Yet disgust with the Bush administration's slipshod planning and careless use of troops is steadily mounting. At a recent gathering of current and retired military officers, retired Marine Gen. Anthony C. Zinni—who endorsed Bush in 2000, became his Middle East coordinator, but then broke with the administration over Iraq—spoke for many when he said, "My contemporaries, our feelings and sensitivities were forged on the battlefields of Vietnam, where we heard the garbage and the lies, and we saw the sacrifice. I ask you, is it happening again?" according to *The Washington Post*'s Thomas E. Ricks. Last month, after Bush gave a speech to returning members of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division thanking them for their bravery, one young soldier told the *Los Angeles Times*, "He likes war. He should go fight in a war for two days and see how he likes it."

Curiously, such anger towards hawkish civilian leaders who avoided putting themselves in harm's way is not something most Americans share—at least not yet. While Bush's poll numbers have been plummeting, the drop reflects worry over the continuing chaos in Iraq more than any growing anger at administration members for ducking service in their youth. Partisan Democrats may be furious that a president who sidestepped combat now poses as a war hero. But what really drives Democrats crazy is that Bush seems to have paid no political price for doing so.

This tolerant public attitude did not begin with Bush. In fact, in the last three presidential elections, a candidate who had served in the regular military was defeated by a candidate who had not (Clinton v. Bush in '92; Clinton v. Dole in '96; Bush v. Gore in '00). It has now become unremarkable for those who in their youth avoided putting themselves on the line for their country and their ideals to successfully impugn the patriotism of political opponents who served with honor. Think of Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.). He got out of Vietnam with a bum knee, but unseated former Sen. Max Cleland (D-Ga.), a Vietnam veteran and triple amputee, with ads attacking Cleland as soft on national security. Somehow, in the public mind, the ancient link between physical courage and patriotism has been broken in this country.

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One can imagine any number of reasons for this shift. One obvious factor is the end of the draft in 1973, which no longer forces every young man to consider the possibility of military service. Another is the triumph of individual market thinking in this country—the growing sense of personal freedom and individual entitlement in modern life, and the corresponding fading of the notion that one has a duty to anything outside one's self and family. But there is another, related factor for which liberals—especially those of my generation, who came of age in the late 1960s—bear heavy responsibility. Too many of them opposed the Vietnam War in ways that required no personal sacrifice, while at the same time successfully grabbing the banner of high idealism by growing their hair long and marching in anti-war protests. Though they may not want to admit it, members of the anti-Vietnam War movement, who today dominate the opinion-making class, helped erode the connection in the public's mind between patriotism and courage, idealism, and sacrifice. And that change in public attitude has let today's so-called "chicken hawks" off the hook.

Children of privilege

I was 20 in 1968 when I faced the draft. Young men of my age had to choose one of several paths. Many went to Vietnam, though often without wholeheartedly supporting the war. Whatever their motivations—whether instinctive patriotism or fear of going to prison—I respected their choices. Others were indifferent to the war or even supported it, yet used student deferments or doctors' notes to avoid being drafted, thus assuring that someone else would have to take their place in the rice paddies. I didn't know such people and couldn't even have imagined their thinking. But a number of them are now running the war in Iraq. To me, theirs was by far the most cowardly and least patriotic choice of all.

Then there were those who opposed the war and were determined not to fight in it—either out of conviction or fear or, probably in most cases, both. Some fled to Canada; I had visited Canada myself in 1967, but rejected friends' entreaties to stay there to avoid the draft. The vast majority, though, stayed in the United States and worked the loopholes, garnering student or medical deferments which let them protest the war almost risk-free, having fun or seething with rage but suffering few lasting consequences, unless they

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got unlucky during a demonstration. It seemed a solution tailor-made for children of privilege: the opportunity of a lifetime to don the mantle of idealism, no real sacrifice required. But it didn't work for me. I felt that because the reasons the government gave for the war didn't make sense, the only honest course of action was to refuse to participate in it, and to accept the consequences of doing so.

In mid-1968, I received a notice to report for induction in Los Angeles. I went to the induction center, passed the physical, and told them I was going to refuse. I went into a room, where an officer told me three times to step forward. I refused each time, and he asked me to write a statement saying that I had refused induction. I did so, and went home. One morning, an F.B.I. agent came to the house in the Oakland Hills where I was living. He put handcuffs on me and took me to the Oakland County jail. My housemates called a legal service. A lawyer filed papers to have me released on my own recognizance. After several trips before judges, and a couple of weeks in the Los Angeles County jail, I was sentenced, at the age of 21, to 42 months in federal prison.

Many of my generation opposed the Vietnam War in ways that required no personal sacrifice, while at the same time grabbing the banner of high idealism by growing their hair long and marching in anti-war protests.

Fish in the tank

Two other young men and I rode to the Federal Correctional Institution in Lompoc, Calif., in the back of a U.S. Marshal's car. Located in a rural area north of Santa Barbara, the place boasted blue skies and ocean breezes. Eucalyptus trees lined the parking lot. The prison itself, a three-story concrete structure, looked in many ways like a standard-issue government building—say, a regional water-district treatment plant—except, of course, for the pair of tall chain-link fences, each topped with several strands of barbed wire, and for the manned guard towers standing at the corners of the grounds. After the overcrowded hellhole that was Los Angeles County jail, the prison looked almost inviting.

One of the marshals opened the back door of the dark sedan and let the three of us out. Our handcuffs were linked together by a small chain, and ankle chains limited each of our steps as we trudged toward the two glass doors that bridged the gap between the fences. A buzzer sounded, and the first glass door clicked open. As soon as we entered the room, the door closed behind us. Another buzz and click, and we walked into the prison grounds and into a basement-level room in one of the wings. A guard, in navy slacks, light-blue shirt and red tie, and a khaki-clad inmate were waiting inside. The marshals, joking with the guard, took off our cuffs and chains, and left.

We took off our street clothes, which would be sent home, and went through what would become a familiar ritual: stand naked, hold your hands out to your sides, turn them over; mouth open, raise your tongue; run your hands through your hair; turn around, bend over, reach back, and spread 'em. The inmate handed us each a set of white boxer shorts, clean, well-pressed khaki trousers and shirts, white socks, and brown leather shoes. We got dressed, and he gave us quick haircuts. We each got two blankets, two sheets, a pillow case, and a toilet kit, then followed the guard upstairs through the cell block I later learned was called "M unit." It was late morning, and only a handful of inmates were walking in the hall. Two sets of double doors on the right opened onto a high-ceiling dining room, where I could see square tables, positioned diagonally, each surrounded by four brightly colored plastic chairs on metal legs, as if it were a fast-food restaurant with seating for a couple of hundred. From there, we were escorted to the Admission and Orientation unit, or A&O, where we would spend our first month before being dumped into the general population to sink or swim.

A&O was an open dormitory, the size of a gymnasium but with a low ceiling. Sun streamed through large windows, many of which were open to allow the ocean breeze to blow through. Bunks with dark gray blankets and neatly folded white sheets lined the right and left walls, and formed a double line down the center. Beside each bunk was a waist-high locker of tan metal. Several inmates were sprawled on their bunks sleeping. A couple sat in groups quietly talking, and others lay with their heads propped up, reading. A 15-foot area between the entrance and the dormitory was lined with sinks, urinals, and free-standing toilet bowls, eliminating any privacy. The guard gave us our bunk assignments. Donn, my scrawny seat-mate on the trip from Los Angeles, who had gotten a few years for selling 50 tablets of LSD, was two bunks down from me. We made up our bunks as best we could from looking at the others, and sat on them until the guard came by to count us, a four times-daily ritual.

In the evening, the guard unlocked the wide entrance door, and we followed the rest of the A&O inhabitants—or "fish"—to the yard. A square field encircled by a quarter-mile running track, the yard had basketball courts, backboards for handball, and a softball field. Beside the track, on the side towards the machine shop and other work areas, were basketball courts, a heavy punching bag, a speed bag, and a weight-lifting area. The section for "hippies"—the middle-class draft dodgers and drug offenders—was around

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Art by Rahiem Milton

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the handball courts. The low-riders—working-class white youths with slicked-back hair, so named for the customized vehicles in which they cruised the streets of Pico Rivera, Fontana, and Torrance, stuck around the baseball diamond, and the blacks hung out at the basketball courts. The Mexicans kept over towards the boxing and weight-lifting equipment. As we walked across the yard, I could almost feel the spheres of menace. Pairs and trios of stone-faced young men walked with their hands in their pockets around the track. Since Lompoc was officially a youth facility, most of the inmates were under 25, with the majority in their late teens and early 20s.

There, I met several other of the draft prisoners, and by the time I left A&O, I would know almost all of them. By home town, they were about evenly split between Northern and Southern California, though the ones from the San Francisco Bay Area inevitably had shorter sentences—18 months or so, of which they could expect to do 14. L.A. sentences tended towards three years, or 42 months in my case. There were few bona fide "activists," who had actually taken part in organizing actions against the war. I sat on the edge of our group, watching the other draft resisters. Clean-shaven and short-haired, they looked, except for the uniforms, just like the well-behaved kids I'd gone to high school with. They didn't spout revolutionary rhetoric or hippie slang. More often, they just listened to the guitars that several of them were playing. From time to time a couple of them got up to play handball.

Overhead, huge military transport planes, apparently just back from Vietnam, glinted red in the setting sun as they banked to land at nearby Vandenberg Air Force Base. The guitars played, and a harmonica wailed. A softball cracked against a bat. Basketballs rattled into metallic nets. Handballs whomped against backboards.

After an hour or so, the loudspeaker crackled, then blared. "This is final yard recall, final yard recall." We stood up, shook out our legs, and walked slowly towards the gray building. The hallway was darker, more crowded and noisier than during the morning.

Back in A&O, I lay on my bunk and read a magazine. All in all, I thought, it was a big improvement from county jail, and nowhere near as grim and ugly as the scenes my imagination had conjured. But after the lights went out, a young man a few bunks away began to cry. At first he tried to hold it in, but then he began sobbing audibly, saying, "Oh, great..."

The rest of us listened and said nothing.

Do your own time

For several days, I remained almost entirely unable to eat. My stomach squeezed into a tight ball at the thought of a meal. I also slept a lot that first week. It wasn't that I was tired. Sleeping simply got me out of there, if only temporarily. I escaped into vivid dreams of love and freedom, but when I awoke, that same clenching of my abdomen reminded me where I was.

Over the next few weeks, we fish learned all kinds of useful things about the prison, both from the orientation talks we were required to attend and from other inmates. We learned to make our bunks and sweep and mop the area around them, so we would get good marks on inspection. We learned about the commissary, where we could spend $20 a month on candy, magazines, and even a cheap watch.

We also learned about the "slum" cell blocks, labeled K, L, and M, where each of us would be sent after a few weeks in A & O. The bottom two, L and M, were the classic cell blocks of prison movies, three tiers of six-by-eight-foot spaces, with vertical bars covering the front of each cell, including the doors that rolled open sideways when a guard at the head of the tier turned a crank. Anyone who walked by could see you sleeping, changing clothes or sitting on the toilet. The other units, including K, had their cells built as part of the outside walls, and at least had individual window openings on the outside world. While some fish went directly to K unit, most went to L and M. The only worse place was I-block, the isolation unit, which was the jail within the jail. It was where those who had broken serious rules got sent for punishment, and those who were in danger in the general population were kept in protective custody.

All the slum units were full of low-riders, who in particular hated us "hippies." The blacks and Mexicans only hated each other, and whites in general. Part of it was a class issue—for low-riders, we represented the people who had looked down on them all their lives. And partly it was political, because we had chosen to oppose the war, something none of them would consider. They thought us spoiled brats and glib, unpatriotic cowards.

Early on, Donn, the middle-class LSD-dealer, began adopting protective coloration, learning to mimic skillfully the stride of the low-riders: outward-splayed feet swung forward at the end of stiff but loose-hanging legs by a lift of the pelvis, like a cross between Pinocchio and a penguin.

In A&O, we didn't know where we would be sent, but we knew it wouldn't be pleasant. The ultimate fear in all prisons, of course, is of overpowering homosexual rape, and there was the potential for that at Lompoc. Far more common, though, was violent extortion: threatening to beat an inmate, or actually beating him, so that he would pay for his safety, whether in commissary goods or in coerced sex. Being the target of such intimidation was known as being "pressured." Our fear isolated us as individuals even as it gave us something in common. It isolated us because of one of the first rules we learned: Do your own time. If your friend is in trouble, he has to get himself out of it. Try to help him, and you'll only get dragged in yourself. "If someone tries to pressure you, you have to be ready to fight," guys told each other. "Just pick up whatever is near and hit him with it. You'll get the shit beat out of you, but they'll leave you alone after that."

Of course, what set the draft resisters apart even from other middle-class prisoners was that, by our "crime," we had explicitly rejected violence as a solution to disputes. Other prisoners often took that to mean that we promised not to fight back if attacked. Since the fundamental rule of prison is to attack the vulnerable, that made us natural targets of intimidation. Our main defense in the face of a

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threat was the idealism at the heart of the so-called "movement"—that is, treating others as human beings, and insisting on the same in return. But that approach didn't always work.

One afternoon Tom, an unusually upbeat draft resister from Sonoma, came back from his job on the farm. Everyone had returned to their cells for afternoon count, except us orderlies who had to finish sweeping and mopping our tiers. When I passed Tom's cell, he was standing near the door. Dark globs were splattered across the bunk, walls and locker. He looked at me. His face seemed to have crumpled. "It's shit," he said. It was the first time I'd seen prison break through his determined cheerfulness.

Later that evening, he stopped by my cell. "I realized that whoever did it was just doing their thing," he said. "Their thing is hating hippies."

Gross and subtle forces

Like Lompoc's other draft resisters, I waited anxiously each day for new resisters to arrive with fresh information about the outside world. In my first months there, I hoped that we were indeed the vanguard of a massive, serious effort to stop the war by refusing induction. I hoped that the thousands of college students who were then leading marches and organizing sit-ins against the war would refuse induction and let themselves be sent to prison. If they did, their cases would clog the courts, and their educated, influential parents would clog congressional phone lines with non-negotiable demands to stop the war immediately. If the anti-war movement became more influential inside the prison, it would make it easier to withstand the pervasive threat of violence and might help people who were angered or bewildered by our presence there understand that we were doing what we did because we loved our country, not because we hated it.

Unfortunately, it didn't seem to be happening. While I was in A&O, I counted only around 45 draft resisters, out of a total prison population of nearly 1,100—and that was the high point. Besides Lompoc, only one or two other federal prisons in the West housed many draft resisters—that meant we had a sizable percentage of the entire contingent of California draft offenders. When I got moved to J-unit, there were fewer than 10 other resisters in that block, and another 20 to 30 scattered elsewhere.

Since I had never been a part of any organized anti-war activity, I particularly wanted to know the thinking of the other draft prisoners. Most certainly didn't fit the popular image of anti-war protesters. None had been involved in violent demonstrations. In particular, none favored attacking the police or burning government buildings. Anyone expressing even mild support for the North Vietnamese or Vietcong would have earned instant rejection as a nut case. I once brought criticism on myself by simply using the word "exploitation," as in American companies exploiting American workers, too loosely.

Tom, for one, seemed to favor playing guitar and smoking dope as his chief form of anti-war activism. Grass was available even in prison, especially for those who worked outside the fences where it was easy for friends to drop off a bag surreptitiously. Morris from Los Angeles practiced transcendental meditation, divided the world into gross and subtle forces, and eschewed drugs, even coffee. His instrument of choice was a harmonica. Despite their differences, each in his way strove to attain a state of mind that kept the crude realities of prison from "bringing them down"—that is, depressing them. Talking politics was for them almost as heavy a downer as witnessing prison violence.

Bona fide "activists," those who shouted idealistic slogans at marches, or took more serious actions, were largely no-shows in prison. With few exceptions—such as Walt, a devout Quaker who had been arrested for burning files "liberated" from a draft board office in southern California—most anti-war activists managed to avoid serving jail time themselves.

The paucity of activists—the kind of people who literally defined the movement in the public mind—magnified for me a second fear as deeply rooted as the one that had stolen my appetite. No one talked about it aloud, but its power was obvious in the way we waited anxiously for new resisters to arrive with fresh information about the outside world. The fear—or, since I can only speak for myself, at least my reading of it—was that perhaps our going to prison for draft resistance was all for nothing. And that would not be far from concluding that it was a mistake.

Many of us watched the demonstrations nightly on television. So intense was the interest in political events that the library converted a storage room into a room for news-only television. It was popular not only with "hippies" but with militant blacks. Though we supposedly were political allies, the racial tensions of prison, and of the times, made it an uncomfortable mix.

One stormy evening, the topic dominating the news involved a prison in a Southern state. According to the report, militant blacks had virtually taken over the prison, running it with Gestapo-like efficiency, intimidating and controlling not only the other inmates but the guards themselves.

A few minutes later, the lights suddenly went out. Because the room hadn't been designed for activities, it didn't have battery-powered backup lights. Thus the blackout left us in complete darkness, unable to see anything. I froze, hardly even breathing. A chair creaked, and someone coughed quietly. For almost a minute, no one spoke. Then a voice came out of the darkness.

"Hey, you hear that about them brothers running that joint down south?"

"Yeah, bro, I heard."

Then there was silence again. And out of the darkness came a kind of clarity: There was no way I could have prepared for this, no way anyone could prepare for prison. A minute or two later, the librarian opened the door, and herded us into a brighter room.

After the first six months or so, discussing the demon-

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strations going on in the country lost its urgency. We'd pretty much figured out everyone's positions long before, and after that political talk became more a matter of intellectual amusement than anything else—prison was, after all, boring. We had become spectators—we assumed all the demonstrations meant something, but none of them affected us directly. After the Kent State shootings, we passed around the *Newsweek* issue with the famous cover photo.

In particular, no one talked about the possibility that the peace marchers weren't really doing their part, and were leaving us holding the bag. It was like a taboo, something so difficult to think about that it was better to pretend that we didn't. But I think we all feared that we would simply find ourselves forgotten, our draft resistance rendered irrelevant or ineffective, because so few members of the movement stood with us shoulder to shoulder, as the saying goes, by joining us in prison.

Splendid isolation

Before the political lethargy fully set in, though, some of us acted. On Oct. 15, 1969, when a nationwide "moratorium" called for people from every walk of life to take the day off from their usual activities, in protest of the war, I and a few other draft resisters decided we wouldn't work that day. The risk we would be taking was real—our actions would go in our prison records, or "jackets," and could delay our eventual releases on parole.

After breakfast that morning, when most of the inmates had gone to work and I was supposed to start sweeping and mopping the second tier, I approached the guard on duty in my unit. Every step was tiring, as if routine were a blanket wrapped around me so tightly I could hardly move. The guard only looked up once I was standing in the door of his cubicle. "I'm not going to be working today," I said. My voice was shaking slightly.

He looked at me for a few seconds, eyebrows raised. "What's the problem?" he asked.

"There's a moratorium against the war today." My voice was firmer.

"A what?"

"A moratorium. People all over the country are staying away from work to

Art by Robert Meganck

How To Be a Chicken Hawk

GEORGE W. BUSH, President

In 1968, George W. Bush, the son of a Texas congressman, applied for a position with the Texas Air National Guard, a popular way to avoid being drafted for combat. Although there was a long waiting list, and Bush had received only mediocre scores on his pilot aptitude test, he was quickly accepted. Bush's service was supposed to last until 1973, but in 1972 he received a transfer to a guard unit in Alabama, allowing him to work on the Senate campaign of a friend of his father. When he failed to take his annual flight physical, guard officials grounded him, and he never flew again. His final officer-efficiency report from May 1973 noted that supervisors hadn't seen him or heard from him.

DICK CHENEY, Vice President

Cheney, who explained that he "had other priorities" at the time, received two draft deferments —one for being a student, and one for being married. In 1965, the government announced a change of policy: Married men would now be drafted, unless they were also fathers. Nine months and two days after that announcement, the Cheneys had their first child.

JOHN ASHCROFT, Attorney General

Ashcroft received six student deferments during Vietnam, plus another "occupational deferment," on the grounds that his civilian job—teaching business law to undergraduates at Southwest Missouri State University—was critical. "I would have served if asked," he has said.

PAUL WOLFOWITZ, Deputy Secretary of Defense

Wolfowitz received a student deferment, allowing him to attend Cornell, then do graduate work at the University of Chicago, where he remained until the draft was over.

TOM DELAY, Speaker of the House (R-Texas)

Delay received a student deferment, and in 1969 drew a high number in the draft lottery, meaning he did not have to go to Vietnam. At a 1988 press conference defending his and vice presidential nominee Dan Quayle's failure to serve in Vietnam, Delay argued that so many blacks volunteered to serve as a way to escape poverty that there was no room for patriotic conservatives like him and Quayle.

RICHARD PERLE, Pentagon Adviser

Perle received a student deferment, enabling him to go to graduate school at Princeton, then went to England to work on his doctoral thesis. Fed up with Perle's constant war-mongering last year, Sen. Chuck Hagel, (R-Neb) who volunteered for Vietnam and earned two Purple Hearts, suggested that perhaps "Mr. Perle would like to be in the first wave of those who go into Baghdad."

ELLIOTT ABRAMS, National Security Council, Middle East Director

Abrams avoided Vietnam with a bad back, which vanished once the war ended.

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protest the war."

He sighed. "All right, just wait here, and I'll call the lieutenant."

A few minutes later, the lieutenant arrived. He was short and fit, had a military crew cut, and worked his jaw muscles. His navy blue slacks were tight, and revealed several inches of white sock above each shoe.

"What's going on?"

I told him. This time it was easier. He didn't seem surprised. "You're sure you want to do this?"

"Yes." I suddenly felt I could breathe freely again.

"OK, let's go."

The guard put the brass key in the lock and pushed the big door open. The lieutenant and I walked the 30 or 40 yards down the hallway to I-block, the isolation or solitary confinement unit. By now the hallways felt claustrophobic. The steel door swung outward, and we went in.

Just inside was a barred cage. A guard opened a door in the cage, and walked with me to a cell on the second tier. Another guard turned the handle at the head end of the tier, and the cell door rolled open. I walked inside. Like L and M units, the three tiers of cells in I-block were in the center of the unit, facing outwards. But there was one difference: Because the windows in the outer walls were covered, it was dim all the time. I lay on the bare mattress. There was nothing to do, no coffee, no newspapers, no commissary snacks. I hadn't realized how dependent I'd become on a daily routine. But within a half hour, several other draft resisters showed up. So did some startling news. It came, ironically, from some low-riders who had also been sent to solitary that morning.

"Hey, they got some protesters on the highway out there." All conversations were shouted from cell to cell, and thus to everybody.

"What's it about?

"I don't know, man, it's something about the hippies in here that are against the war."

Another draft resister who arrived soon after filled us in with the news. In the excitement, internal enmities were forgotten. There were people demonstrating outside in support of the draft resisters inside—that is, us.

For a moment, it was as if the walls had disappeared. I didn't wish to be anywhere except where I was.

I marveled at the brightness that had flooded my spirit. And as I did, I had the tiniest glimpse of how faith in someone or something beyond oneself could sustain prisoners, whether of politics or of war, through years of imprisonment without losing—and in fact, strengthening—their love for humanity, and for their country.

Indeed, part of the brightness grew from the realization that I loved being a citizen of this country. However angry we Americans might be at one another, everyone involved recognized the fundamental validity, even value, of protest. No one even considered stopping people outside a prison from demonstrating their support for those inside. I also realized how little I'd appreciated, or even been aware of, the depth to which the principles ensuring such freedom were embedded in the souls of even the most down-to-earth and non-intellectual individuals, such as prison guards and even inmates.

Around noon, an orderly came by with a meal. I told him I didn't want it because I was going to be fasting for the day. He said he had to leave it anyway, even if I didn't want it. I left it untouched, sitting on the shelf protruding through the slot in the door, until he picked it up an hour later.

Later that afternoon, I overheard a shouted exchange between a couple of low-riders that would previously have depressed me.

"Hey, Vito, can you tell me what this word means? It's spelled a-e-s-t-h-e-t-i-c."

Vito, the leader of the low-riders, replied, "You know, man, I don't know what that word means, but you know what? One thing I know is any dude says that word to you, he be a bull-shitter."

I could hardly keep from laughing. Vito was right. And he knew what the word meant.

That evening I witnessed, or at least heard, one of Lompoc's legends. Mike, yet another draft resister, was spending his entire sentence in solitary confinement. He didn't even get visitors because, as a strict vegetarian, he refused to wear leather shoes as required in the visiting room. Although he was on the other side of the cell block, I knew it was him when the sound began to swell. Every night, Mike led the inhabitants of I-block in a songfest. It was the high point of my year to hear the toughest cons in the joint bellowing, "He loves his damned old rodeo, as much as he loves me. Someday soon, going with him, someday soon."

Cake and a hacksaw

The next morning, I faced a disciplinary hearing in a room at the foot of I-block. A bald, cold-eyed lieutenant with a look of permanent disgust on his face informed me that I'd been punished for refusing to do my job, and asked me whether I was ready to go back to work. I said yes, and returned to J unit. It felt almost depressing to get back into a daily routine. But I was glad I hadn't been sent back down to L or M.

While I was gone, another orderly, a short, black-haired low-rider named Danny, had been moved into my cell, so I ended up one cell over. A couple of days later Danny approached me. He'd been moving the writing shelf from one side of my former locker to the other. When he unscrewed the mounting bolts, he found a hacksaw blade concealed between the bracket and the locker.

"Was that yours?" he asked.

"No, I'm minimum security," I told him. If I wanted to escape, all I had to do was get assigned to a job outside the fences. More overtly criminal types, including most low-riders, were classified medium security, which meant they had to stay inside the fences.

A few months later, Christmas transformed the prison. Starting in early December, inmates covered the interiors of the cell blocks with elaborate decorations. Streamers rose from the railings to the ceilings. Holiday designs cut from construction paper adorned the walls. I pondered how so

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many supposedly tough convicts could turn so creative, and even sentimental, so suddenly. One reason, I decided, was that for many of them, this was the closest thing to a real home they'd ever had. They were there with their homeboys, the only people who truly cared about them. And I began to understand why one biker I'd met in county jail had told me, in all sincerity, "The joint's no fun unless you run with the low-riders."

The hippies didn't take part in the decorating. That was one reason the low-riders hated us: We were snobbish outsiders looking down our noses at their family party. But hippies had their own way of celebrating. Because rules on packages from home were relaxed for the holidays, they passed around things like slices of organic fruitcake and whole wheat bread. One evening, Randy, a rather spacey draft resister from the Bay Area, gave me a piece of carrot cake his wife had baked. I later found out it had been laced with the hallucinogen psilocybin. Sitting in my cell all evening, I had hardly noticed the difference.

On Christmas day, the warden stopped by each cell block. The guard released us from our cells one tier at a time, so the warden could shake our hands and give us a two-pound bag of hard candy. Oddly enough, my main feeling that day was embarrassment. Like someone alone and friendless in a big city, I didn't want people to see me spending the holiday without a loved one, even though everyone else was doing the same. I felt like the whole world was watching my loneliness on television.

By then, the influx of draft prisoners had dwindled to little more than a trickle. I tried not to dwell on the depressing but very real possibility that we had all been suckered into believing that the movement was with us all the way, when in reality it wasn't the least interested in what we were doing—that we'd been manipulated into going to prison by a bunch of glib and publicity-seeking "activists" who themselves had no intention of putting their own well-being at risk.

A couple of weeks after the holidays, a minor riot broke out in J unit. Some native American Indians, most of whom were in prison for hurting or killing someone while driving drunk, got drunk on home brew liquor. They attacked the guard, a mild-mannered, bespectacled man named Mr. Smith, who managed to lock himself in his cubicle and call for help. Other inmates set fires to trash cans and broke some windows. I watched through the window in the door of my cell. Inmates in K, the next unit over, watched enthralled from their windows.

Soon, 40 or 50 guards showed up, some called from their homes nearby. They streamed into the cell block in a mass of bellies. Mr. Smith, minus his eyeglasses, came out of his office and rolled open the cell doors, one tier at a time. "Get in your cells, men," he called. The Indians got sent to I-block, and the riot was over.

Down on the farm

By the middle of 1970, Tom and several other resisters with shorter sentences had gone home, leaving only a few of us in J unit. The atmosphere darkened accordingly. In December of 1969, President Nixon had instated a draft lottery, which reduced the number of college students and grads at risk of being called for service and thus the opportunity to resist the draft. Thus despite the apparently huge numbers of anti-war college "activists," only a relative handful of them had actually refused induction during the time when it could have become a mass phenomenon. The lottery had ended that possibility entirely. Ironically, anti-war activities such as the long, violent battles between protesters and police at San Francisco State University still appeared on TV every evening. Yet it was becoming clear to me that those of us then at Lompoc would be the last draft resisters to arrive. And that meant my worst fear was coming true: We were on our own.

Although the realization of what that meant sank in slowly over the months, one specific event in early summer drove home my sense of both personal and political isolation. One evening, I was cleaning the second tier after the 9 p.m. final lockup. As usual, inmates would call out as I passed, asking me to pass something to inmates in other cells—magazines, cigarettes, and the like. This evening, the calls came one after the other.

"Orderly! Take this to 12."

"Orderly! Give this to 14."

Suddenly, the whole cell block joined in: "Orderly! Orderly! Orderly!" The shouts echoed off the walls. I was humiliated, and worst of all, had become a target. There was no way to hide, no way to defuse the hatred one-on-one, and no way to fight back.

In the middle of it all, Danny, the low-rider who had been transferred to my cell during my time in I-block, came up to me and handed me a pack of cigarette papers.

"Take this up to E6, would you?" That was on the top tier.

The unit guard, a broad, decent man named Mr. Kelly, was standing there. "Don't take it," he said.

Danny didn't make a move to take it back. "I can't take it, I'm busy," he said. "Got to finish cleaning up." He walked away.

I turned and climbed the stairs. As I did, I saw that, stuffed in with the cigarette papers, was a joint.

When I got back to my cell, my ears burned for an hour. I thrashed on my bunk until dawn, unable to sleep. After breakfast, I went to the lieutenant in charge of job assignments and requested a transfer to the farm, where most of the remaining draft resisters were already working, and which was outside the fence.

When my name showed up on the transfer sheet that evening, Danny confronted me.

"Did you asked to be transferred to the farm?" he asked.

"Yeah, about a month ago," I lied.

"Oh," he said, blinking rapidly to conceal his confusion, and turned away. I suddenly sensed that he was one of the ones who threw shit in Tom's cell. And now they'd done the same to me, in a different way.

A couple of months after I was moved to the newly opened minimum-security camp outside the fences, word

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came from the main prison that Danny had escaped, along with his brother. In the middle of the night, they'd cut through their bars with that hacksaw blade, scrambled over the fences and gotten away clean. At the time, I still had six months at Lompoc before I went free.

Cardboard-soled shoes

The day I got my parole date, I was allowed to make a phone call. I called my sister and her husband, with whom I would be staying after my release. He was a Vietnam veteran, only eight months out of the service. When they'd visited me, he had told me about the fragging of officers in Vietnam. "I bet you didn't know there was anything that heavy going on over there, did you?" he had said. I realized he felt society despised him for having gone to war. Talking about fragging was his way of saying that ordinary soldiers weren't war-mongers; they hated the war as much as anyone else did.

He answered the phone.

"This is Bob," I said.

"Where are you?" He was wondering, I realized, whether I had run away from prison.

"I'm still at Lompoc. I got my release date. It's May 4."

"I'll tell Linda. She's at your mom's." There was a long silence.

"OK, well, see you later." As I hung up, I felt the guard who'd dialed the call for me looking at me with pity. I guessed he'd observed the same thing dozens of times: young men about to return to a family and world that might not feel comfortable having them come back.

On the morning I was released, I had breakfast, said goodbye to a couple of people, and put my belongings—mainly a couple of fat three-ring notebooks—in a cardboard box. According to custom, I'd given everything else away. I got into the cheap new street clothes I'd been issued—polyester slacks, button-down shirt, and cardboard-soled shoes.

My sister and brother-in-law arrived, and we left. On the drive back to Pasadena, everything looked somehow brighter than real life. I soaked in normality as if I'd never seen it before.

Later that afternoon, I looked in the newspaper and found a reading by a local newspaper columnist who had written a book. It was at Pasadena City College, within walking distance, that night, and I decided to go.

"You really want to go there?" asked my brother-in-law. Eight months back from Vietnam, he was still having a hard time dealing with social situations.

"Sure, why not?"

I found myself sitting next to a blonde young woman in a smart business outfit. She tried to start a conversation, and I realized I had nothing to chat about. The only experience I could discuss was prison—it overwhelmed anything else that had ever happened to me. So I told her I'd just been released that morning. I could tell she hadn't the slightest idea why anyone would do what I'd done.

As I listened to the writer reading his elegantly styled prose, in the corner of my vision I glimpsed her eyes looking me up and down with horror, as if she were trying to decide whether I was going to rape or kill her. I didn't bother to try to explain that, as far as I was concerned, I had done something right, not wrong. After the reading, she got away from me as soon as she could.

A lot to answer for

Following my release, I thought less about the question that had seemed so important back in A&O: whether the "idealism" of the movement had been real or posture. After all, what did it matter? The war was winding down, and no one seemed to care, or even realize, that it could have been over by 1970 or earlier, instead of dragging on for several more years, at the cost of nearly 10,000 more American lives, if the movement's self-proclaimed anti-war activists—millions of college students—had given up their deferments in the preceding years and clogged the courts, instead of plotting more marches, sit-ins, teach-ins, or building takeovers.

In the years since I was released from prison, I haven't talked much about my experiences. Most people I've mentioned Lompoc to, like the woman at the book reading, have seemed unsettled by it—they haven't been able, or even wanted, to wrap their minds around why I did it. Had more of us resisted the draft, had the experience been more effective in changing the government's war policy, or at least in entering the conscience of my generation, it might have been different. Veterans of all stripes have been able, slowly and painfully, to convey what they went through and to support one another, and the anti-war activists have had more than their fair share to say. There were too few of us draft resisters to share our story, and so what we did has largely been invisible to history. But now I think there is a point in bringing it up.

In 2003, it turns out that my questions about the anti-war movement do again matter. The reality of a major war launched by the Vietnam generation for reasons that, just as with Vietnam, didn't quite make sense, finally drove me to think through the implications of Lompoc's missing activists. I quickly concluded that the anti-Vietnam War liberals and the pseudo-patriotic neocons were more alike than different. Both embodied a privileged elite claiming to be paragons of idealism and patriotism, while hiding behind college or medical deferments to avoid putting themselves on the line, either in rice paddies or in prison. Indeed, there's a case to be made that, for conservative draft dodgers, one of the biggest benefits of the war with Iraq has been its extreme (and certainly intentional) divisiveness, which helps obscure how closely, in terms of character and integrity, they resemble anti-Vietnam War draft dodgers.

But more important, I realized that the success of the anti-war movement in selling itself as idealistic, while never showing up to do the hard time, directly paved the way—in fact, pioneered the techniques—for neocons to sell themselves as courageous patriots, after having never shown up for service in Vietnam. And with neocon draft dodgers now trying to prove their patriotism at the cost of American lives, that leaves anti-Vietnam War liberals with a lot to answer for. ◆

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Boob Tube

MTV used to be about ambition. Now it's about hot tubs.

By Benjamin Wallace-Wells

Given the number of times it was hyped and replayed during MTV's other programs, even the network's casual viewers could not have missed the signature moment of last winter's season of the channel's emblematic program, "The Real World." During the second episode, in a casino whirlpool on the Las Vegas strip, Trishelle, the full-figured airhead from the bayou whose mother died when Trishelle was 14, moseyed across the hot tub to Brynn, the all-American party girl from rural Washington state, and started kissing and groping her. Steven, the straight guy working to put himself through business school by tending a gay bar, turned to the camera, and gave it an unmistakable what's-a-guy- to-do? look. Then he joined in. The girl-on-girl action gave the moment a certain edgy salaciousness that had eluded dramatic high points of previous editions of the show, most of which involved too-drunk cast members stumbling about. It also lacked something else, more important for the nation's first reality television program: any element of plausible reality.

"The Real World" gave birth to the entire genre of reality television, and it has has taken on to be everything that many people have come to hate about such programs: a lowest-common-denominator, near-pornographic sensibility, and the pervasive sense that we are not watching real people or events, but something soap-operatic and staged. But in its early years, when the program was at least a little bit better, "The Real World" embodied the sorts of characteristics that fueled reality television's extraordinary rise to popularity: the intensely personal dramas, the vivid characters, and the sense (as was the case on "Survivor" or "American Idol") of the almost-attainable-exotic, the notion that we were seeing a world that we did not quite belong to, but wished we did.

Those first shows were aired when I was 13, and I loved them absolutely. They gave viewers like me a sense that there was a more sophisticated, urbane, mature version of cool out there to which we might aspire, once we escaped the stultifying, tyrannical cool of adolescence. It also gave us some idea of what that new cool might look like. It would involve many friends who had dreadlocks, and some who were intimately acquainted with the operation of turntables. Brightly colored t-shirts with ironic slogans would abound. We would know people who were gay, who were from foreign countries, and maybe even some who were both gay and from foreign countries. Heartbreak would be involved. We would believe deeply in things. There would be exposed brick, and facial hair. We would sometimes be depressed, but when we were depressed, attractive people of the opposite sex would talk to the camera and say how sexy we were when we were depressed; it would be cool to be brooding. We would all be starting out in careers, but they would be exciting (at least to us)—cartoonist, punk rock singer. Everyone would tell us our dreams were not attainable but we would know they were. And we would all grin sheepishly when we admitted that we had been less-than-cool in junior high, but everyone would laugh and not believe us, because how could you believe that we had once

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not been cool? We didn't realize we were being herded into a narrow cultural corridor from which we would emerge as full-fledged yuppies, renovating row houses and evaluating progressive private schools and pasta pots. We just thought we were going to be cool.

From the beginning, critics said that the fantasy of "The Real World" presented was deeply parochial—a "Saturday Night Live" skit at the time depicted the show as a lot of whiny twenty-somethings in flannels arguing over who had to feed the fish—and they were right, it was parochial. But for people my age, life itself was pretty small-minded, and the parochial ideal that MTV was selling (your hip twenties) was a whole lot better than the parochial culture we were involved in (middle school). Plus, there was a sweet earnestness to those early episodes that inquiring adolescents could appreciate. The characters struggled with real career ambitions and romantic interests. They were not simply acting for the camera: They were acting out their lives. Unlike teenagers who were (and still are) the program's target demographic, the show's characters were in their mid-20s. They had clearly defined and articulated ideas of what they wanted to do with their lives—to be a cartoonist or a dancer—and they were trying to get there. In the first four seasons, the overarching, propulsive drama was that of people starting to immerse themselves in quasi-adult lives and careers, and the episodes documented the ways in which their experiences corrupted or emboldened their original notions of who they were.

But "The Real World" has since changed its formula dramatically. No longer an outlet for twenty-somethings to brood about their future careers, the show has become a cyclic three-month on-air party for teenagers to mingle in hot tubs and obsess about the present. The locales have changed—from creative meccas like New York and London to vacation spots like Las Vegas, New Orleans, and Hawaii. MTV has rejiggered the show to require characters to engage in artificial, season-long contests or projects—like putting together a fashion show—which the characters embrace in the way most American teenagers experience spring break: as a big party. The houses, which started off as funky lofts, have become ludicrously large and fancy fantasy palaces: the top floor of the Palms Hotel, a chateau in Paris. The characters don't even look like real people anymore—they are far, far too attractive, the guys all balled-up pecs and biceps and the girls all slim, languorous limbs. The show never depicted ugly people, but the characters, in the beginning, had the luxury of being only ordinary looking. By Las Vegas, the cast looked like refugees from a workout video.

MTV made its name by beaming an edgy version of urban cool to middle-American teens, which put it in the position of preaching to its audience, or at least to those suburban kids who already dreamt of the big city. "The Real World" was a crucial part of this image, and it also let the network document for its viewers one way in which adolescents become adults (a topic of eternal interest to the teenaged audience). But MTV now uses the show to broadcast a much different narrative of how to grow up: spring break, hookups, and drunkenness. This is much closer to the experiences and fantasies of most teenagers. This new image has won MTV more viewers—the network and "The Real World" are both more popular than they ever have been. But as MTV has revamped its notion of what is cool, it has thrown its aspirational message overboard.

Hip to be square

When MTV launched in 1981, the New York-based network aired nearly 24 hours of music videos—interspersed with stunts of the sort that snarky, with-it New Yorkers would play on a clueless nation. There was a phone-in contest to win a Prince concert in your hometown, whose winner was a Mormon girl from rural Utah (the concert occasioned loud local protests). It force-fed the nation Madonna, at the time an unknown party girl from the Lower East Side who ran with Warhol. MTV sent a young, cute drag queen out on tour with Van Halen, and laughed as the oblivious California rockers repeatedly hit on him (or her). This sensibility appealed to certain adolescents (I loved it), and MTV's viewership grew fast and furious. The network, which then saw itself as "cutting-edge," embraced new cultural developments which more mainstream outlets eyed warily. For example, when "Yo, MTV Raps!" went on the air in 1988, hip-hop was still largely an underground phenomenon from which big record labels and radio stations shied away, but MTV recognized that it was bound to be a very big deal.

By the early '90s, the network had raised its sense of its own social conscience and saw its role as a political and cultural cluing-in point for youth hungry to be in touch with the broader world. "MTV News" grew more sophisticated; no longer content just to detail the minor adventures of celebrities, it sent correspondent Tabitha Soren to report from the presidential campaign trail in 1992. The network's "Rock the Vote" campaign for youth voter registration was high-profile; Bill Clinton took advantage of the opportunity to reach new young voters, by starring as the sole guest of an MTV election special where teenagers questioned him about his candidacy. Liberal establishment types, who had spent the '80s wagging adult fingers at MTV, later hailed the network's public service messages such as "get involved," and "wear a condom." The music also had political dimensions, from the militant black empowerment rap group, Public Enemy to didactic liberals like Pearl Jam and R.E.M. to the feminist strummers of the Lilith Fair. Although you sometimes got the sense that MTV had gotten itself into a public position it didn't really know what to do with—such as when a flirty blonde asked candidate Clinton whether he preferred boxers or briefs—there was also something charming about the network's earnest agenda. For all the tiresome chatter about Generation X's ironic, disengaged, navel-fixated brooding, it was nice to see MTV plunging its teenaged viewers into the real world, complete with ideas, politics, and consequences.

"The Real World" was born in this moment of the net-

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work's history. The premise of the first show was to put a microscope to the lives of seven young people who had moved to New York in order to make it in the entertainment industry: an aspiring model, a rapper, a dancer, a critic, an artist, and a singer. The show worked because these were real people, doing real things, and encountering the new and unexpected.

Archetype cast

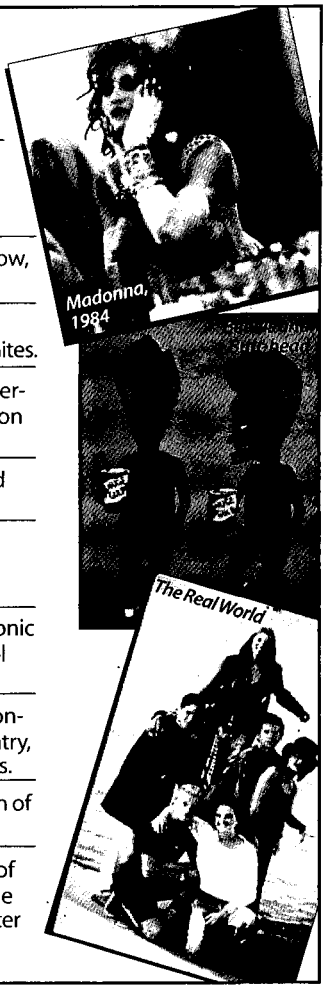
But by 1997, the program had begun to chase the cultural moment, rather than creating it. For the first time, in "The Real World 5: Miami," MTV decided that the cast's real lives weren't quite enough to bear the dramatic heft of the show, and so they gave their seven characters something to do; the cast members had to conceive of and develop a business, with the help of a couple of thousand dollars of MTV seed money, and the show would track the struggles of the start-up (the enterprise they settled on, "Delicious Deliveries," never got off the ground). It was an idea with groundbreaking potential: In the late '90s, the sexy thing to do after college was to be an entrepreneur, and MTV was uniquely placed to document that experience. But the network didn't track a group of people who had already started a business on their own. They selected seven young people for other characteristics (diversity, on-air dynamism, looks) and then told them to become businessfolk. Whereas "The Real World" had once felt organic, following young people in their lives as they lived them, it now seemed artificial: As in "Survivor," or much of the present crop of reality television, it erected arbitrary hoops for its cast to jump through.

But in a way, the project was necessary—the Miami cast members were simply not as interesting as their predecessors, and for several reasons. First of all, they were younger and their ideas of who they wanted to become were less defined. By setting the show in a city where most of the cast were not expecting to live permanently (this was the first of "The Real World's" vacation locales) the producers gave the show an air of fleetingness, a sense that nothing that happened here really mattered. Then, too, the show had come to be seen as an emerging engine of celebrity, and so the current cast members spent much of their on-air time engaged in self-branding (the winsome gay guy, the Latina sparkplug). From the beginning, "The Real World's" casts seemed to be assembled through a fairly transparent quota system, which basically remains in place today. Most casts featured a series of archetypes: the urbane gay guy, the outspoken black woman (chip-displayed-prominently-on-shoulder), the wacky white guy, the sweet Middle-American girl, the hick. In the early episodes, these differences seemed more authentic, and mutable: When the hick and the outspoken black woman spoke to one another, for instance, you could feel their perceptions shifting. Now, the characters seem to wear their backgrounds like proud, stubborn labels, and their interactions on the show only force them deeper into their own archetypes. The characters, it seemed, were just trying to leverage their appearances into future television gigs. By the eighth season of the show, set in Hawaii, each of the cast members was still in college. Their concerns possessed a corresponding, adolescent irrelevance: Amaya worrying about her large breasts and endlessly asking Colin to please be a little nicer to her; Kaia wondering whether or not she was bisexual.

By the late 1990s, all of MTV's programming was getting less aspirational. In a 1999 article in *The New York Times Magazine*, Marshall Sella was moved to write: "All in all, MTV seems to envision daily life as an endless game of pool

I Want My MTV History

1981	Music Television (MTV) goes on the air.
1984	At the first MTV Video Music Awards, Madonna sings "Like a Virgin" in a wedding dress. Her virginity remains in question.
1987	"Headbangers Ball," a heavy-metal video show, debuts. Mullet craze reaches its apex.
1988	"Yo! MTV Raps" debuts. Hip-hop culture soon compromised by 14-year-old white suburbanites.
1990	MTV helps launch "Rock The Vote," a public-service campaign to encourage voter registration among youth. Vote remains unrocked.
1992	"The Real World" debuts. Nontelevised world revealed to be sham.
1993	"Beavis and Butt-head," cartoon starring two suburban misfits, debuts. Subliterate teens become pop culture icons.
1997	"Daria," animated show featuring deadpan ironic outsider, pokes fun at conformist high-school culture. Most high school kids watch.
1998	"Total Request Live," call-in show hosted by non-threatening Carson Daly debuts. Across country, best friends named Caitlin receive shout-outs.
2000	"Jackass" debuts. Cracks appear in foundation of Western civilization.
2002	"The Osbournes" puts a camera in the home of profane, dysfunctional rocker Ozzy Osbourne and family. Average American family feels better about itself.



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in which people antagonize each other, then storm off to points unknown." But the same focus on teenage dramas and concerns that critics deplored has, in fact, brought more young viewers to the network. After facing declining ratings in the mid-1990s, the network hired executives Van Toffler and Brian Graden to give MTV's programming a facelift: Their brief was to reduce reliance on music videos to increase the ratings among the target young audience. "[In the early '90s] we had influential content, influential music, things were changing, but we had low, low ratings," Judy McGrath, at the time MTV's president, told *New York* magazine this summer. "Back then, our steady diet was a lot of leading-edge stuff, and not a ton of people were watching."

So Graden and Toffler made the network look more like its viewers. They introduced "Total Request Live," which became the network's signature program, a phone-in-and-vote show that gives its teenage music fans exactly what they ask for. The tastes of the young TRL voters, who voted incessantly from home for their favorite groups—mostly benign-imaged, dull-as-vanilla teen-pop bands (good ones like 'N Sync, awful ones like O-Town, 98 Degrees, or Jessica Simpson)—also pushed those same groups even higher on the playlist for all of MTV's programming. The network added a host of new reality programs. "Sorority Life" and "Fraternity Life" detail the weepy, vomit-soaked ins and outs of college life. "True Life" shows hour-long documentaries about typical teenage problems: a girl who's too fat to make the cheerleading squad, a workout-obsessed boy trying desperately to beef up. "Spring Break: Undercover" tracks hyper-fit college students as they get drunk and contrive to hook up in party locales like Cancun. "Jackass" is a series of gross-out skater-punk tricks and stunts, the sort of stuff that bored suburban teens might pull in their spare time. Now the network's programming effectively mimics the lives and experiences of its viewers. The shift in programming has helped MTV's ratings climb for five consecutive years, and more people now watch the network than ever before.

Some critics have complained that this dumbing-down reflects an attempt to lure a younger audience. This is true in part, but not completely: the average age of the network's viewer is slightly over 20 years old, which is not much different than what it has been throughout the network's history. And though critics (and the network's executives) have pointed to shows like "Total Request Live" as evidence that MTV is catering to an younger audience, even those shows like "The Real World," which executives say are meant for a general audience, have gone through these significant changes. The crucial variable may not be age, but aspiration.

MTV has always pursued teenagers; what has changed is the sort of teenagers it is chasing, and what ideal of cool it established to court them. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the network tried to convert its viewers, suggesting to hungry-for-hipness suburban teens that there was something out there cooler and more compelling than their own high school melodramas. The gospel has since changed. What MTV is selling its teen audience now (with "Sorority Life," "Fraternity Life," "Spring Break: Cancun," a more juvenile "Real World") is a bland vision of the immediate future in which the first years of college look pretty much like high school, but without parents or homework. The focus is on having fun, not being challenged by new or different experiences.

Of course, it's a little sentimental to pine for the early days of a television program that probably was never all that good in the first place. Certainly, the first few seasons of "The Real World" could be brooding, reflective, and static. In a way, the new version of MTV is being more honest with its audience, the hot tub threesome incident aside. Most of its viewers were never likely to move to the big city to hobnob with rock stars, run voter-registration drives, and think deeply about their world. Most of its viewers, by contrast, will likely go to college and party. But that promise of cultural revolution held out in MTV's early years was enticing, glamorous, and for some teenagers, useful: It let them imagine possibilities for their future that they might not otherwise have seen so vividly. The grunge generation has gotten a bad rap, but the early '90s was a hopeful moment for young people. MTV's vision of current youth culture, which has drawn more viewers to the network, is by contrast bland and unremarkable.

Migrants and homebodies

America more than any other country has long been about the freedom to leave where you are and who you are—to light out for a new frontier and become something different, bigger, better. This is one of our nation's central myths, and that dream informs our notion of what makes us unique. But it has also always been a minority taste, even in the most open and dynamic of times, like the early 1990s. Most people in America stay put, physically and culturally, and have no overwhelming longing to be very different from how they grew up. There are good and bad things to say about both impulses, the migrant's and the homebody's. The former can be snarky, elitist, and somewhat alienating. The latter can be confining, unimaginative, and resistant to needed change. There's a common pattern to the way the tensions between the two impulses play out each generation as manifestations of youth culture. Think of rock music, for instance, or jeans: They started out announcing a new breed of migrants, and end up typifying the homebodies. This slow fade, from cutting-edge to undeniably establishment, has also been the trajectory of "The Real World." Many of the viewers who bought into the ideals of early episodes ended up enacting them. But it is likely that a far greater number did not. What MTV is seeing, in the popular new episodes of "The Real World," may be evidence of the way that calibration is weighted. Most teenagers do not aspire to a different kind of life. For them, getting to go on spring break every now and again is fantasy enough. ◆

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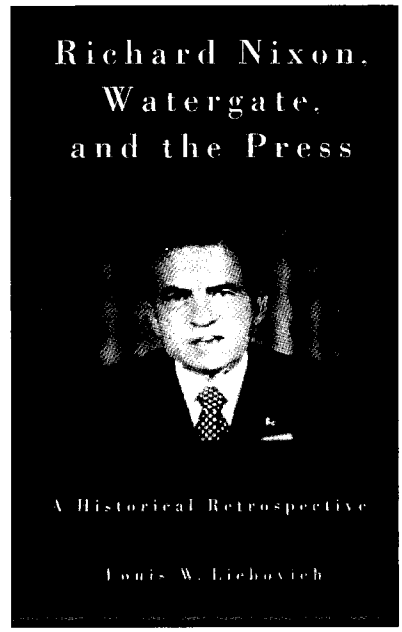
Nabobs Revisited

What Watergate reveals about today's Washington press corps.

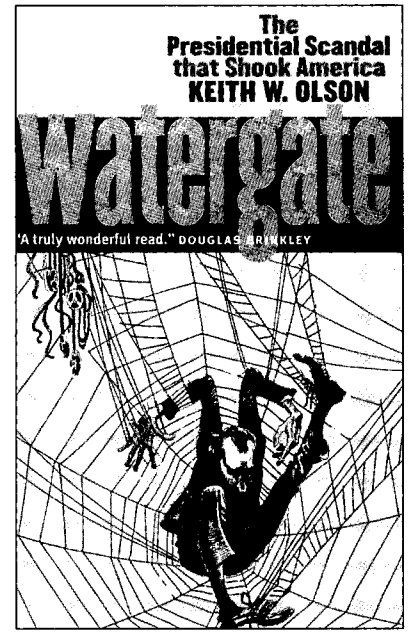
By David Greenberg

"The definitive judgment on a president is almost always written during his life or in the first obituaries," wrote the historian Fawn Brodie, referring to Richard Nixon, in 1981. "The patient work of historians and biographers may serve to rediscover and underline it, but it has always already been said by a contemporary, and usually with distinction." For young historians writing about Nixon (myself included), this is a rather dispiriting assertion. But there's more than a little truth in it.

Indeed, the journalistic accounts of Nixon, and especially of his downfall, written during and just after his presidency—J. Anthony Lukas's *Nightmare*, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's *The Final Days*, Theodore H. White's *Breach of Faith* —have proven hard to improve upon. As a result, Nixon scholars, not wanting to write what might be greeted dismissively as "another Watergate book," have turned to under-explored areas of his presidency, such as his domestic policy making. One unfortunate consequence of this shift was to cede the Watergate field to conspiracy theorists, like the authors of the incoherent *Silent Coup* (1991). Even some of the better Nixon books of late steered clear of Watergate and thus may have unintentionally fostered the notion that the scandal need not underpin any discussion of the former president. Add to this trend the steady debasing of the coinage of "scandal" in Washington, and you get an overall shrinking of the sense that Watergate was a uniquely important event.



Richard Nixon, Watergate, and the Press: A Historical Retrospective
By Louis W. Liebovich
Praeger Publishing, $49.95



Watergate: The Presidential Scandal that Shook America
By Keith W. Olson
University of Kansas Press, $35.00

The two books under review offer a sensible corrective to this historiographical drift. Both are by middle-aged scholars for whom Watergate was a vivid and central political experience. Both offer careful accounts of Watergate based largely on secondary sources. Unlike some of their contemporaries—such as Stephen Ambrose, who ended his Nixon trilogy avowing a newfound admiration for his old nemesis—neither man comes bearing a revisionist account. Rather, both wind up reaffirming what most of Nixon's contemporaries, Republican and Democratic alike, concluded at the time of his resignation. Watergate was not, in the famous, fatuous, and inaccurate phrase of Nixon press secretary Ron Ziegler, simply "a third-rate burglary," but, in Liebovich's words, "a lesion on the surface that revealed a malignancy below."

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But these books do more than merely remind us of something—the gravity of Watergate—that we may have forgotten. They also shed a not-altogether-flattering light on the one institution whose reputation was enhanced by Watergate: the Washington press corps.

Press corpse

It is widely held that the news media performed heroically during Watergate, exposing secrets that otherwise would have stayed hidden. For liberals especially, the affair reinforced a tendency—rooted in a bedrock belief in free speech and open debate—to side with the press against politicians who complain about their press coverage. (Complaining about the press, the journalist Fred Barnes has written, is like whining about the weather: It affects everyone, and you can't do anything about it.)

In 1998, however, many who normally sympathized with the press watched horrified as the media, including respected journalists, got caught up in the mania surrounding Bill Clinton's impeachment—some parroting prosecutor Ken Starr's line, others predicting or calling for the president's resignation, yet others fanning the story with excessive treatment. The whole sordid interlude was, for reflexive defenders of the Fourth Estate, a rude awakening. It showed that the right's old complaints about the media's prosecutorial tendencies and herd instinct were, on some important occasions at least, justified.

Liebovich, for one, seems to agree with this analysis. He characterizes Watergate as virtually a Pyrrhic victory for the press, since "after the infatuation with Woodward and Bernstein passed, the public wondered about the role of the press generally in Washington. Many were ... convinced that Nixon was right about the excessive power of the media." Certainly, the coverage of the Clinton impeachment (and other political dramas, like the 2000 election recount fight) led many people who once considered the media relatively neutral purveyors of the news to see the Washington press corps' significant faults.

This belated recognition, that the press acts not as a pawn of the left or the right, but according to its own (sometimes screwy) internal laws and logic, is a critical one. Liebovich writes that the "catalyst" for his study was a question he fielded in 1999 from a radio talk show host, who asked whether the causes of Nixon's resignation and Clinton's impeachment were the same. Olson says he was motivated by a wish to educate the next generation about Watergate's distinctive importance—"a Constitutional crisis second only to the Civil War"—a distinction, he notes, that both time's passage and the hype over the Lewinsky affair (not to mention the assorted semi-scandals under Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush, and Bush) have helped to blur.

Liebovich argues that Nixon's obsession with his press coverage typified the instrumentalist mentality that produced Watergate. He locates the beginning of the Watergate story not in the 1972 break-in of Democratic headquarters or even the 1971 formation of the White House Plumbers but in the illegal wiretaps Nixon had placed on inquiring reporters and loose-lipped aides in 1969. Watergate represented a war against the political opposition, but it was also an assault on the press.

Liebovich draws on an original survey of newspaper coverage he conducted of Watergate during 1972. Many historians have critiqued the mythology, enshrined in *All the President's Men*, of *The Washington Post*'s lonely pursuit of the story in the summer and fall of 1972, noting that the FBI, the courts, the Senate Watergate Committee, and the special prosecutor actually brought Nixon's malfeasance to light. But if our culture has over-dramatized the exploits of Woodward and Bernstein, Liebovich's research shows that their reputation rests on a hard empirical foundation. Of the Watergate articles and editorials in 15 newspapers, the *Post* produced 39 percent, *The New York Times* 19 percent, and the other 13 papers 42 percent combined. Some newspapers, including the *Los Angeles Times*, relied as heavily on Woodward and Bernstein's articles as on those of their own reporters. "A major scandal was largely ignored and an election was held under false pretenses," Liebovich concludes. "Woodward and Bernstein kept the story alive—that is the significance of this time period, and that is what ensured their places in history."

Although less explicitly focused on the press, Olson too gives journalists considerable credit. In his telling, journalists didn't topple Nixon so much as keep public attention fixed on damaging information at critical junctures. He suggests that the intense press coverage of a series of events in April 1973—from acting FBI director Pat Gray's destruction of files to Nixon's improper contacts with the judge in the Pentagon Papers trial—spurred Republican stalwarts, including party chairman Bob Dole, at last to question the administration's conduct. The editorial outburst following Nixon's speech some days later announcing the firing of his top aides likewise helped secure the appointment of a special prosecutor. The press may have just been relaying what government investigators knew, but the way in which it did so forced policymakers to respond. Its role, as Olson sees it, was a kind of midwifery.

Enter the swarm

Nonetheless, to credit "the press" for investigative tenacity in Watergate is too generous. In the first stage of the scandal, a mere handful of reporters joined Woodward and Bernstein in their pursuits. In the later stages, starting in April 1973, a multitude of others jumped on the bandwagon. Although this swarming coverage did help rivet public attention on the scandal, we often forget that it also had its unseemly side. In this respect, it foreshadowed the press' sometimes inglorious behavior during real and imagined scandals of later years.

It was always hard to sympathize with Nixon when he griped, as he did in his memoirs, that in mid-1973 "a convulsion had seized Washington ... Restraints that had governed professional and political conduct for decades were suddenly abandoned." One can also brush off similar sentiments from his steadfast loyalists. But what about

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the press corps regulars who agonized over their own colleagues' excesses? Esteemed veterans—and certified Nixon critics—including Joseph Kraft, Peter Lisagor, John Osborne, Harry Reasoner, and Daniel Schorr recoiled at how reporters who had missed the story in 1972 overcompensated in 1973. Osborne, *The New Republic*'s revered correspondent, likened his peers to "dogs who have scented blood and are running the fox right down to his death."

Journalists were right to sense that a major constitutional crisis was underway. "The documentation makes untenable the charge that liberal politicians and a liberal media drove Nixon from the White House," Olson asserts. Yet it's also true that in the hothouse environment, critically minded reporting often gave way to a simple hunt for lies and misdeeds. Zeal encouraged errors. In May 1973, Walter Cronkite opened the CBS Evening News erroneously charging a Bethesda bank run by Pat Buchanan's brother with Watergate money-laundering. The AP incorrectly reported that John Ehrlichman was present at a key cover-up meeting. ABC's Sam Donaldson had to apologize for implicating former White House aide Harry Dent in Nixon's campaign sabotage efforts. Other news outlets overplayed trivial items, as *The New York Times* did by placing on the front page a three-column story—ultimately inconsequential—about the possibility that Nixon's campaign had received gambling money from the Bahamas.

Meanwhile, most of the exposés of the later period came from writers who worked at small papers or floated outside the White House press corps' tight nucleus. John Blackburn of the *Santa Ana Register* first reported that Nixon acquired the Western White House at San Clemente with shady financial help and renovated it with public funds. John White of the *Providence Journal-Bulletin* exposed Nixon's minuscule income-tax payments. Others who broke fresh ground, such as Jack Anderson, were once scorned as eccentrics but are now celebrated as mavericks. Most of the high-profile Washington

They're after me.

National Archives

Richard Nixon's obsession with the antagonistic press aside, two new books on Watergate show that the media acts not as a pawn of the left or the right, but according to its own (sometimes screwy) internal laws and logic.

correspondents reverted to pack journalism during Watergate's climactic months—only this time around the pack was swimming in Watergate rather than ignoring it. Even during its heyday, then, the press corps showed itself capable of—if not structurally hard-wired for—the kind of collective prosecutorial mentality that frequently substitutes for tough-minded investigation.

Tape delay

All of which raises the question: Were Watergate and Whitewater mirror-image scandals, with conservatives blasting and liberals cheering the media during Watergate and the roles reversed under Clinton? Although time and events have added new perspective to the media's Watergate role, this is a facile conclusion. These books help establish why.

The facts of the matter scarcely need reviewing. Clinton was impeached for giving misleading and possibly false answers under oath to questions about his sex life that were later deemed immaterial to the trial. Nixon resigned for a smorgasbord of incidents in which he illegally abused his presidential power to help himself politically or financially, or to punish his political enemies. Whatever the behavior of the press, the relative gravity of those actions determined each man's fate.

Both of these books rightly conclude that Nixon's actions were *sui generis*. That judgment is significant because historians as a rule don't like attributing so much power to an individual; it usually means neglecting long-term developments that have more explanatory power. Yet with Nixon there seems to be no getting around his singularly crucial role.

It seems that Olson would like to conclude otherwise. In his epilogue, he contends that Watergate blossomed from a Cold War national-security state in which every president from Harry Truman to Lyndon Johnson "used exaggerated rhetoric, crisis analysis, and oversimplification" to justify both the commission of illegal acts and the concealment of them from the public. But Olson seems to recognize that this analysis, which in the 1970s was fashionable with the New Left, is at odds with the story he has just told. And so even as he critiques the post-World War II power structure, he can't avoid the verdict that Nixon's crimes were "unique."

Liebovich, for his part, is tempted to toss Nixon in not with his predecessors but with his successors. Every president from Ford to Clinton aroused distrust in the press for his efforts at manipulation. The resulting negative and even sneering coverage kept public cynicism high. But Liebovich also cannot allow his recognition of a long-term dynamic in presidential-press relations to obscure what he calls Nixon's oversight of "one of the most corrupt and immoral administrations in U.S. history." Nixon's "abnormal preoccupation with the influence of the press," he determines, "was largely responsible for

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the most despicable of White House covert activities."

Like Olson, Liebovich concludes that Nixon's own actions were the key to his demise. Well into 1974, after all, Nixon had a fighting chance to survive. Though public opinion was coalescing against him, without conclusive proof of his role in the cover-up, he wouldn't have been impeached. But his own tapes caught him discussing hush money and clemency for the defendants in the break-in trial and recorded him plotting to have the C.I.A. squelch the investigation under bogus national-security pretenses. The revelation of this baldly criminal behavior alienated not only moderate congressmen, but also conservative loyalists, without whose support Nixon was doomed. It was not George McGovern but men like Barry Goldwater, the stalwart Republican senator, and John Rhodes, the House Minority Leader, who forced Nixon to step down. "When President Nixon resigned," Olson notes, "...Americans stood with uncommon unanimity on a crucial political issue that had once divided them."

Besides the culture of scandal, another development of the last generation has been the rise of press criticism as a staple of journalism. The pioneers of this criticism of the late 1960s and early 1970s understood that the press corps had grown to be what the journalist Douglass Cater called "the fourth branch of government" and that it had to be scrutinized like any other branch. While the acknowledgment of the power of the press is welcome, if not overdue, what's most surprising about its behavior in both the Clinton scandals and Watergate is its modest influence on the ultimate outcome. In both cases, a few journalists did heroic—even historic—work. Others performed their job creditably. Many more were suggestible and sheep-like. The difference between 1974 and 1998 was not the changes in the press corps, but the fact that Nixon had committed serious abuses of power. Nixon—not the press—brought himself down.

David Greenberg is the author of *Nixon's Shadow: The History of an Image.*

Count Me Out

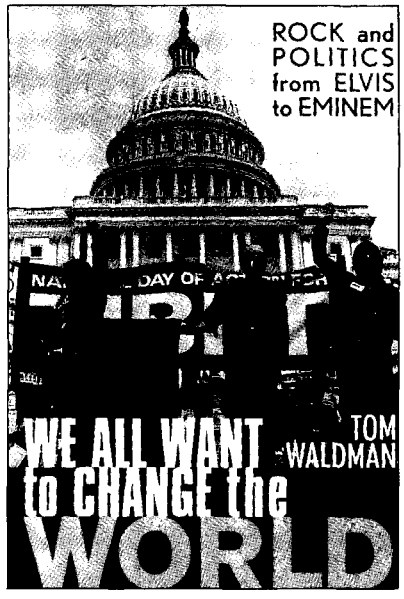
Why rock and politics don't mix.

By David Segal

We All Want to Change the World ought to be a shorter book. The history of rock and politics could be summarized in an hour or two, because pop stars—or their handlers—are typically smart enough to stick to their strengths, namely selling music and piercing their extremities. Many performers are simply apolitical or indifferent, and the few who dare to approach the podium tend to tiptoe. Even the Beatles tune that provides this book's title is a study in equivocation. "You can count me out," John Lennon tells destruction-minded agitators on "Revolution 1," a cut from the *White Album*. He then promptly changes his mind. "In," he mutters a moment later.

But with *We All Want*, author Tom Waldman wades into this pool as though it were a great lake, and for 300 pages he dawdles like a man with a month to kill. His goal is strikingly timid. The book, he announces in the prologue, "holds that the shape, direction and the history of rock and roll, soul and rap has been affected by the Vietnam War, women's lib/feminism, gay liberation, black nationalism and self-reliance, the environmental movement, affirmative action, President Reagan and President Clinton."

Well, no doubt he's right. It would be bizarre if an art form as popular and as porous as rock were totally impervious to current events, wouldn't it? The question isn't whether politics has had an impact on rock, and vice versa, but how large that impact has been. And the answer is: not very.



We All Want to Change the World: Rock and Politics From Elvis to Eminem
By Tom Waldman
Taylor Publishing, $24.95

This couldn't be news to Waldman, a former congressional assistant and author of a book on Chicano music. He quotes rockers throughout *We All Want* who seem to be urging him to give back his advance and write about something else. "I've always said, and I don't think I'm being revisionary here," says Michael Stipe of R.E.M., "I don't think music and politics mix." (And R.E.M. is

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actually one of the more civic-minded bands out there.) "I think the only vehicle for political change is going to vote," says Ray Manzarak, former keyboardist for the Doors. "I don't see how rock can affect the propositions on the ballot, or the list of candidates in the national election."

Waldman doesn't heed these warnings. Instead, he tells the familiar tale of rock's origins in the '50s, its maturity through the '60s, its nihilistic turn when the Sex Pistols showed up in the '70s, and its assorted subplots over the last three decades, all the while casting an eye toward the political realm for any evidence that Planet Rock and Planet Politics have altered each other's courses. He finds some, particularly during the Vietnam-War era, a period when socially conscious music actually sold.

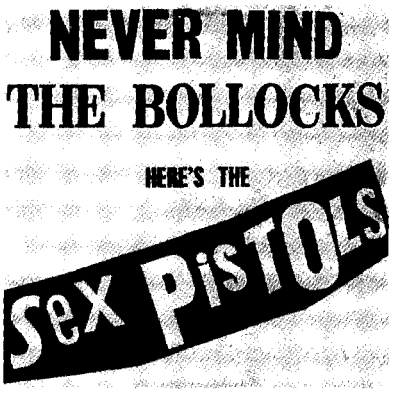
If an author wants to revisit this well-worn turf, he'd better plant the flag somewhere original and then defend his position entertainingly. With a couple of exceptions, Waldman doesn't. At one point he claims the Byrds were the third most influential band ever, behind the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, an assertion that readers will be thrilled to encounter, no matter their opinion of the group, since it's at least promising fodder for a good argument. He also notes that Chuck Berry's "Brown-Eyed Handsome Man" includes a reference to a "2-3 count" in a baseball game. Well, there is no such thing, of course, but as the author rightly points out, Berry was so brilliantly attuned to the cadence of his verses that he was willing to sacrifice sense in the interest of lyrical rhythm.

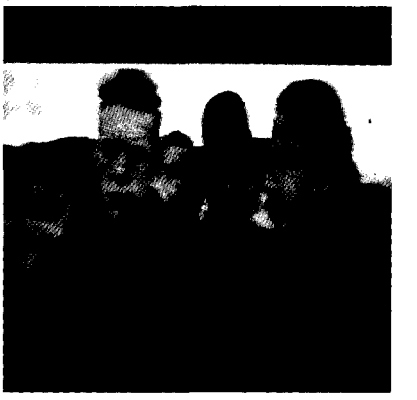
The number of good details and smart provocations are dwarfed by a welter of facts that are both well known and beyond debate. "For decades, [Dick] Clark's face remained almost inhumanly free of wrinkles," he states in a section about the American Bandstand host and entrepreneur. That's true. "Elvis and his crafty manager, Colonel Tom Parker, were on to something, and that's putting it mildly." Also true, to put it mildly. "Today a familiar rock hit from the 1950s, 1960s, or 1970s can enliven a rally in California, Maine, and Alabama—Democrat or Republican." Right again. "Cool people attend parties, where rock and roll is played all night long, to paraphrase the lyrics of numerous hit singles from the 1950s," according to Waldman. Yes, they do.

Part of the trouble here is that politics can't really explain all that much about pop. Or rather, as an influence it pales next to forces that don't involve the vote, like access to the radio, records, and instruments. To understand David Bowie, for instance, you need to realize that the guy heard lots of Edith Piaf courtesy of Radio Luxembourg, and spent a lot of time browsing the bins at a local record shop that stocked American artists like Little Richard. He would combine those two influences, plus an interest in Jacques Brel's musical theater, to create glam. Politics might have played some role in the birth of Ziggy Stardust, but it was tangential at best.

Waldman surmises that the British produced so many great singers and bands in the 1960s because the country was "experiencing a sense of relief or even liberation at relinquishing its empire." The theory is that instead of going abroad to oversee the colonies, youngsters stayed home and learned the 12-bar blues. That could be part of it, but the origins of the Beatles, for one, can't be explained from that sort of altitude, at least not the parts that are remotely interesting. There's a harmonica solo on "Love Me Do" for a very non-political reason: Lennon had stolen the instrument from a store. His thievery no doubt had less to do with the Suez Canal crisis than with his love for Howlin' Wolf.

When Waldman finally addresses his core questions, he hits them glancingly. Why do most rock stars lean toward the Democrats? A couple of halfhearted guesses are ventured: These artists might be rebelling against their Republican parents, or they might feel guilty about their wealth. Could be, but before he develops either notion, he's soon scrambling to get both hands around something obvious. "Whatever the explanation, Democratic politicians and party operatives are just happy to have their support, especially if it includes endorsements, contributions and benefit concerts." Right again!





Which of these albums seriously affected a major political movement or election?
a) The Beatles' *Revolver*
b) Sex Pistols' *Never Mind the Bollocks*
c) The Clash's *London Calling*
d) U2's *Joshua Tree*

Answer=none

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"And here's my position paper on wage and price controls."

National Archives

The reality is that most artists keep at least three bodyguards between themselves and any agenda more complicated than hanging on to fame. Why? Economically speaking, ignoring politics makes sense. The vast majority of rockers—more than 90 percent—are lucky if their careers last three albums, which means they'd be foolish to spend any of their goodwill trying to convince fans to buy something other than their new CD. Even the longtimers tread with care. Bruce Springsteen's last album, *The Rising*, was inspired by the attacks of September 11, but there's hardly a political thought on the album and not much hint of what the Boss would do about the specific problem of terrorism. Springsteen understands that rock, like most art, doesn't endure when its point is persuasion or propaganda. The vaguer you keep it, the longer it lasts. One of the best-selling Vietnam-related songs was Sgt. Barry Sadler's "The Ballad of the Green Berets," a patriotic chest thumper that could have been written by the Pentagon. When was the last time you heard that one on the radio? How about Little Steven's anti-apartheid rant, "Sun City," which assembled a bunch of stars and asked them to sing lines like this: "We're rockers and rappers united strong/We're here to talk about South Africa, we don't like what's going on." Little Steven had his heart in the right place, but this track is now as moribund as the Botha regime.

The few acts that mix the Molotov of politics and rock without the cocktail exploding in their faces are those that are ideological to the core. Rage Against the Machine, a now-defunct California band, pushed an anti-corporate agenda of hard-left issues. (They were apparently Zapatistas, for starters.) Sure, the group was signed to Sony Records—the very sort of machine that these boys raged against—but they never pretended to be anything other than polemicists. If you bought their album, or attended their shows, you asked for an earful.

Which helps explain the ruckus surrounding the Dixie Chicks a few months back. Lead singer Natalie Maines told a London audience in March that she was embarrassed that President Bush is from her home state of Texas. The ladies weren't known at the time as rabble-rousers, and the country music world isn't known for its tolerance of dissenting opinions. Many radio stations threatened to drop the Chicks from rotation, which led to a drop in sales. Though Maines declined to up the ante in a subsequent barrage of interviews, she didn't apologize either.

The dip was temporary, and the trio launched one of the most successful concert tours of the summer. There will be performers who assume the lesson of the brief Chicks backlash is to keep your mouth shut, unless you're singing. The real lesson, though, is that if you're sufficiently well-loved, you can get away with anything, even speaking your mind. U2 ranted against the gun lobby right before encores during its last U.S. tour, a sideshow that highlighted the band's worst vice, a tendency to get distractingly self-righteous. But Bono and Co. have accumulated enough hits and goodwill that the interruption didn't matter. To his credit, Bono wisely left his case for Third-World debt relief—which is too nuanced for show-time slogans—out of the arenas.

But there aren't a lot of Bonos out there. A few years ago, there was a concert on the National Mall to support resistance against the government of Tibet, and it was clear from interviews with *The Washington Post* that some of the performers that day couldn't find the country on a map. That's not exactly shocking. You want a speech about international affairs from a Beastie Boy about as much as you want your senator to sing "No Sleep Till Brooklyn." Yes, we all want to change the world, but, trust me, nobody wants a rock star to do it.

David Segal is the pop music critic at *The Washington Post*.

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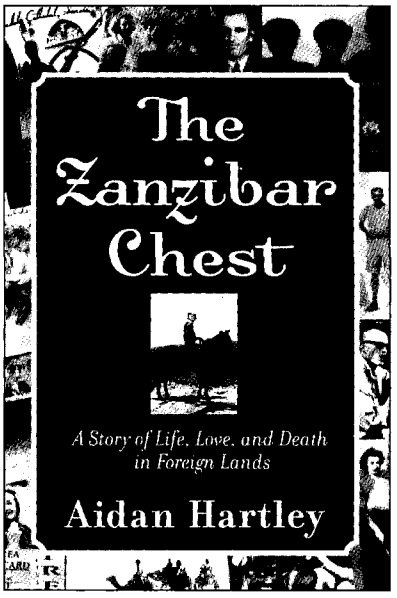
Jungle Book

The foreign correspondent as thrill-seeker.

By Joshua Hammer

The battered Somali capital of Mogadishu was a playground for a certain type of foreign correspondent in the early 1990s. In the aftermath of the civil war that drove out the dictator Mohammed Siad Barre, a corps of young adventurers arrived on the scene to document the country's anarchy while inhaling its post-apocalyptic ambience. Hurtling along the sunswept coast in a battered Toyota filled with AK-47-toting bodyguards, with the turquoise Indian Ocean on one side and a sweep of bullet-scarred Arab villas on the other, one could feel like a star in one's own movie.

As Aidan Hartley relates in *The Zanzibar Chest: A Story of Life, Love, and Death in Foreign Lands*, his dazzling new account of those years, Somalia's horror was inextricable from its allure. When American soldiers first arrived on the shores of the Somali capital in December 1992 to feed the starving, Hartley writes, they quickly found their way to the beautiful white-sand beaches along the Indian Ocean. Nobody had told them that the warm waters off Mogadishu had long been a dumping ground for offal—and a breeding ground for sharks. The beach parties continued for several weeks—until the attacks began. A young Frenchwoman bathing just off shore was torn in half before horrified onlookers, and a Russian wading in the surf was dragged to his death. The Marines erected a skull and crossbones "No Swimming" sign; Club Med Mogadishu quickly fizzled out.



The Zanzibar Chest: A Story of Life, Love, and Death in Foreign Lands
By Aidan Hartley
Atlantic Monthly Press, $24.00

Hartley's book is a gonzo adventure story, a mesmerizing account of his decade as a war correspondent for Reuters, chiefly in East and Central Africa. In his early twenties when he fell into journalism, the Kenya-born Hartley displayed a serendipitous sense of timing. The collapse of Cold War rivalry led to the withdrawal of U.S. and Soviet support for their proxy states across the continent; dictators toppled, pressures for democratization grew, and political convulsions unleashed a wave of civil wars, tribal conflict, and in the case of Rwanda, one of the worst mass slaughters of the 20th century. Hartley was in the thick of it, part of a peripatetic pack who shuttled from combat zone to combat zone—Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda—filing dispatches to deadline and partying hard in his down time. When not following Ethiopian rebels through the bush, or bearing witness to the Rwandan genocide, Hartley was usually "recovering" at "the Swiss Chalet," his sprawling house on the outskirts of Nairobi, more or less of an updated version of Karen Blixen's romantic retreat in the bush, where Hartley and his friends consumed drugs and pursued sexual adventures with abandon.

Hartley weaves this narrative together with the equally compelling story of his parents' own largely unrequited romance with Africa. Hartley's father, born at the turn of the century, was, as the author writes, "a different kind of empire builder," one who believed in teaching indigenous peoples under colonial rule how to develop a degree of self-sufficiency.

After graduating from Oxford, the elder Hartley headed to the Tanganyika Territory, then the flyblown Yemeni port of Aden, to teach irrigation and other agricultural techniques to the remote people of the interior. Aidan's mother served as a nurse in India and Burma during World War II, and arrived in Yemen as the governor's secretary in 1949. After a love affair in the desert, the Hartleys embarked on a life together in Arabia and Africa—staking out ranches in the bush or on the Swahili-speaking coast, subject to the vagaries of Third World dictatorships and the physical dangers of their environment.

The third part of Hartley's book—and the least successful—tells the story of his father's best friend Peter Davey, another British colonial development worker whose love for the "Empty Quarter"—the

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Yemeni desert—leads him into an ill-fated marriage with a local girl and a fatal encounter with a Yemeni warlord. Fascinated by the theme of doomed expatriates in the developing world, Hartley pieces together the story of Davey's life from diaries found in the Zanzibar Chest of his time after his father's death.

The grace and precision of Hartley's writing bring Africa to life as well as any travel writing in recent years. He writes of "flights on battered Antonovs, with the word *nasdrovje!*—cheers!—emblazoned on the nose of the fuselage," of soaring over the African landscape and seeing "the silhouette of our little aircraft ripple over pulverized cities, refugee camps, the acetyline white flashes of anti-aircraft fire." He captures the despair of a Somali refugee camp: "A chorus of hacking coughs heralded dawn, as a few fires built by those with strength enough to gather twigs were lit to cook the dried animal skins and bones they had found out on the plains. By eight, the survivors of the night tottered on spindly legs around and around until they flopped down panting in the heat." He describes the life of the foreign correspondent as one of "all-nighters, hitching rides on tanks busting down palace gates, sipping dictators' champagne, scoops and whores and house arrests ... smelly socks and Caterpillar boots, the shits, deadlines ... coke cut with pig laxative from condoms smuggled in the bowels of living men."

There was also, of course, plenty of death—much of it close to home. In one of his most terrifying passages, Hartley provides a detailed account of the murders of four young journalists—all close friends—who were beaten and shot to death by a Somali mob in July 1993, after they had rushed to photograph the effects of a U.S. missile attack on a Mogadishu compound during the botched pursuit of the warlord Mohammed Farah Aidid. Two other colleagues died after their Ethiopian Airlines jet was hijacked, ran out of fuel and crashed into the Indian Ocean. Hartley had his own share of narrow escapes, including a hair-raising plane crash in the Sudanese bush. Yet the rising body count, seemed, if anything, to energize those left behind.

Debunking the truism often heard on the Africa beat that "no story is worth dying for," Hartley acknowledges that he and his colleagues were driven by ego as much as by their desire to expose brutality and suffering. "This job was all about risking your life to get the pictures, the scoops, or the cover shot," he writes. "If you nearly died for a story, editors sent you herograms. Your friends slapped you on the back. You were in the chips. You got an award. You got none of these if you were safe and ten miles down the road."

Hartley's account of his romance with an American photographer can get a bit cloying, and his repeated digressions into the life of Peter Davey, while brilliantly reported, lack the compelling drive of the author's own experiences; Davey simply isn't that interesting. One also yearns for a bit more about the lives of the Africans he meets along the way. There also isn't much in the way of analysis or context here. He offers a perfunctory history of colonial meddling and tribal tensions in pre-genocide Rwanda, and delves briefly into the Cold-War machinations that turned Third World backwaters such as Ethiopia and Somalia into dangerous, heavily armed dictatorships. Still, Hartley's book is far more than a ramble through the life and times of a war correspondent.

It is impossible to read his account of the doomed nation-building effort in Somalia and not see disquieting parallels with U.S. misadventures in Iraq. The naïveté and arrogance demonstrated by the American military planners who, with the best of intentions, blundered their way into a bloody guerrilla war on the streets of Mogadishu are again on display in the anarchic alleys of Baghdad. Hartley's account brings home the often fatal costs of misreading a vibrant and tortured continent.

Joshua Hammer is *Newsweek*'s Jerusalem bureau chief.

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Out of Change

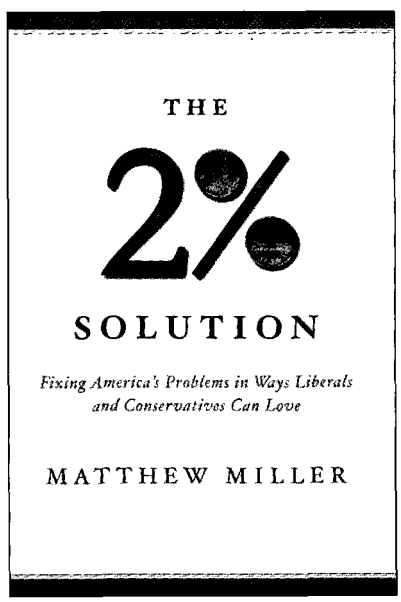
How Bush squandered the money needed to reform government.

By Bruce Reed

Karl Rove must be hard at work coming up with a slogan for Bush's reelection campaign. My current favorites are "Four more wars!" and "No new quagmires!" But there's one Bush slogan from 2000 that we are sure not to hear again in 2004: "Reformer with results."

Back then, the Bush campaign worked overtime to tout Bush's reform credentials. He promised to transform the education system, modernize Social Security and Medicare, and change the way Republicans treat the poor. Bush aides talked admiringly of Bill Clinton's "Third Way," and promised a compassionate, conservative "Fourth Way" of their own.

Maybe they meant to say "fourth down," because whenever the future of reform is at stake, the Bush White House has punted. Instead of providing the muscle to make education reform work—more and better teachers, universal after-school programs and summer school in poor districts, and the resources not only to test students but also to help them succeed—all Bush has given the education system is an easy excuse to set the standards movement back decades. His new war on poverty turned out to be an IRS crackdown to make it tougher for the working poor to receive the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).



The 2% Solution: Fixing America's Problems in Ways Liberals and Conservatives Can Love
By Matthew Miller
Public Affairs, $26.00

The real tragedy of this Bush presidency, however, is not just that he went soft on reform, but that he squandered the secret ingredient that makes bold reform possible: money. The reason that Third Way reforms have worked in the United States and Britain, and why the Fourth Way never made it out of Austin, is that Clinton and Blair understood from the outset that it costs more to change the system than to maintain the status quo. Without additional resources, bureaucracies always find a way around real reform, and politicians inevitably lose the nerve to support change. Put real money behind reforms that the public supports, and opposition from even the most entrenched bureaucracies and interest groups doesn't stand a chance.

Unfortunately, real money is what Bush has misplaced over the past three years. He turned a $5 trillion projected surplus into a $5 trillion projected deficit. With a trillion dollars in deficits in a single term, Bush has done what baseball owners do best—lose money.

Conservatives who used to rail against much smaller deficits now console themselves with the fantasy that the country will soon run so deep in the red that government will have to get smaller. In truth, the core functions of government are not the ones in danger. The more likely casualty of Bush's red ink will be any ambitious effort to reform those functions. For example, the only thing we know about Bush's Social Security plan is that it would require $1 trillion in transition costs. It would be a lot easier to find such a sum if the administration hadn't let $10 trillion slip through its fingers.

That reformer's lament—"Where has all the money gone?"—reverberates throughout Matthew Miller's new book, *The 2% Solution*. Miller, a *Monthly* contributing editor and former aide in Clinton's Office of Management and Budget, set out to write a book about how to fix America's problems by boosting government spending by 2 percent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product. By the time the book came out, the deficit was nearing 5 percent of GDP, a level that even the what-me-worry Bush White House considers the panic button.

It's a shame, because Miller has some interesting ideas for how to use that money. In the Third Way tradition, he offers a veritable Wal-

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Mart of "grand bargains" that address progressive ends through conservative means—tax credits for universal health care, a living wage of $9 an hour built on expansion of the EITC, public financing of campaigns through vouchers to every voter.

Miller's best idea, which parallels campaign proposals by Sen. John Edwards and Rep. Dick Gephardt, is a nationwide effort to put better teachers in the poor schools that need them most. The United States doesn't really have a teacher shortage; we have an urban teacher shortage. Urban districts go begging for teachers, while suburban districts, with higher salaries and fewer problems, have the pick of the litter. As Miller suggests, the federal government could correct that market failure by offering a salary hike to good teachers willing to teach in tough places.

Bush's education reform bill promised a qualified teacher in every classroom, but all the White House has done to help meet that goal is hold East Room events with the First Lady. Miller's plan would double the federal share of K-12 spending from 7 to 14 percent. Predictably, Bush's Education Secretary Rod Paige told Miller that he would prefer to do so without new money.

Some of Miller's grand bargains are less compelling. He desperately wants to launch a school-choice experiment which raises per-pupil spending by 20-30 percent, in return for offering all students vouchers. Miller doesn't seem troubled by the prospect of the federal government paying every child to leave the public schools and every teacher to stay there.

Miller prefers to say the tab for his ideas is just "two cents on the dollar," but 2 percent of GDP adds up to $220 billion a year in new spending. Everett Dirksen was right—"a billion here, a billion there," and pretty soon you're talking about real money. The grand promise of reform comes to earth when Miller explains where the two cents will come from: cuts in spending on health care, education, the poor, and if necessary, defense, and above all, a 60-cent-per-gallon gas tax. He does not say how he expects this to happen, when a solidly Democratic Congress was unable to pass a 5-cent-per-gallon gas tax in 1993, and got thrown out for trying.

Still, it's not Miller's fault that the country is going broke, and he's right that Washington's profligacy is no excuse for solving problems. When he was at the OMB, the government was making the hard choices to climb out of a budget mess much like we're in now. Clinton was investing in crucial reforms that made the medicine easier to swallow: expanding the EITC to make work pay, increasing child care to help mothers leave welfare, fueling the standards movement, and opening the doors of college by doubling federal spending on education. By contrast, the Bush administration has put the country in a hole and kept digging.

Over the next year, Bush will do all he can to avoid mentioning that he has neither reform nor results to show for his first term, and he will make a big show of promising Social Security reform in his second. The cry from every reformer, progressive and conservative alike, should be, "Show me the money."

Bruce Reed, former domestic policy adviser to President Clinton, is president of the Democratic Leadership Council.

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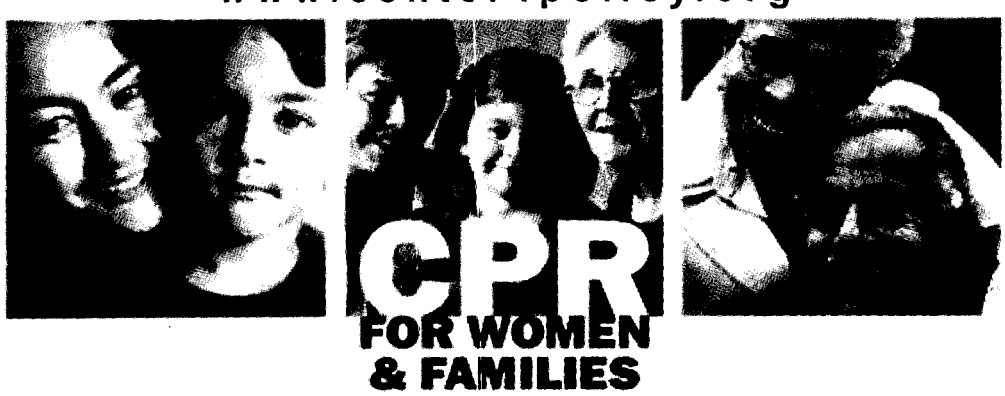

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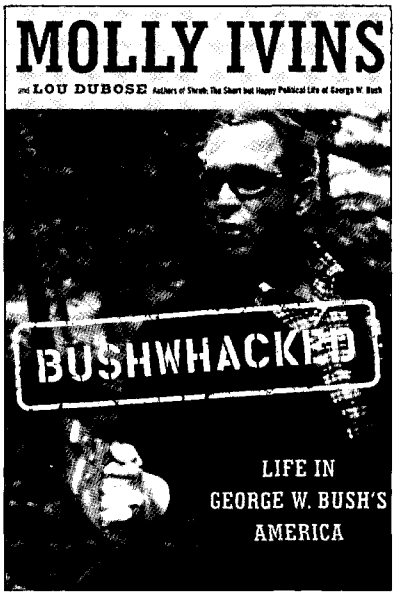
Beating the Bush

How Dubya "helps" business.

By Jamie Malanowski

Molly Ivins and Lou Dubose have been watching George W. Bush a long time. Their first book, *Shrub*, dealt with young Dubya's early political life and his ascent to power. Their new book, *Bushwhacked: Life in George W. Bush's America*, examines the first two years of his presidency. They are not fans.

Their essential thesis is that the president is the perfect product of the political culture of Texas, a state where the first and major role of government is to help business. "Help" in that sentence is to be as broadly defined as possible, including perhaps almost all the ways Paulie Walnuts "helps" Tony Soprano. Ivins and Dubose argue that while most of us have been caught up watching the president negotiate the challenges brought on by 9/11 and the ensuing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, somewhere in the wings his minions have been industriously implementing a radical pro-business agenda. After reading about how the administration has not enforced regulations and not funded programs while cutting taxes and funneling subsidies to special funds, one might even suspect, if only momentarily, that al Qaeda is a Republican subsidiary designed to distract our attention while these policies are put into effect.



Bushwhacked: Life in George W. Bush's America
By Molly Ivins and Lou Dubose
Random House, $24.95

Okay, okay, that's going a little far. But it is true that while the nation has been consumed by the emotional and intellectual challenges of waging a global war on terror, the Bush administration has acted as though it had won a whopping mandate running on Newt Gingrich's 1994 playbook. Ivins and Dubose describe at length how the administration has eliminated, changed, or ignored a whole host of rules and regulations involving clean air, clean water, and clean food, all of which will make or save Bush campaign contributors a pile of money. They quote a 2002 U.S. Department of Agriculture memo that defines the "fecal matter" whose presence would be sufficient to stop a company's production line as having "a fibrous nature"; I'll bet I can name a rancher in Midland, Texas, who knows shit comes in more shapes than that.

Overall, these chapters induce great dismay. You can understand a conservative administration being reluctant to issue new regulations that lengthen the government's reach, but it's just shocking when they contrive to undo long-standing and widely agreed upon social policy by tinkering in the misty netherworld of regulatory agencies. I mean, we're talking about regulations designed to keep infectious bacteria out of processed turkey. Don't Dick Cheney's grandkids eat turkey?

Less shocking, at least to those who expect a certain amount of cynicism from public officials, are Ivins and Dubose's descriptions of how the administration has attempted to camouflage its policies. In January 2002, Bush visited the Youth Opportunity Center, a job training facility in Portland, Ore. He praised it lavishly, got a lot of coverage, and a month later, eliminated its funding. He happily met with the Quecreek miners, never mentioning how his administration had been cutting the mine-safety budget and reducing the enforcement of safety standards. He has even cut the funding of his own No Child Left Behind initiative. On the first day of Gulf War II, his deputy secretary of defense, Paul Wolfowitz, ordered the military-service heads to provide information that would allow Bush to invoke national-security exemptions to environmental laws. Okay, that one is pretty shocking. You have to wonder: Is this really what the Supreme Court elected Bush to do?

Bushwhacked is a useful read; one of the best things about it is that it man-

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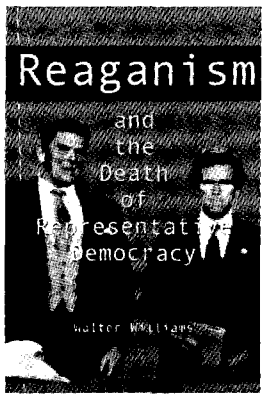
FOR PERILOUS TIMES.



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ages to be critical without resorting to name calling, and drolly sarcastic without being insulting. It is most likely to have an effect in the long run. If the last decade has taught us anything about Republicans, it is that they are fatally prone to overreach; they'll keep grabbing and grabbing until they are exposed, and we get elections like we had in 1996 and 1998. But it is more likely that *Bushwhacked*, and the record it exposes, will have little short-term effect. Recent events will likely make national security and foreign-policy issues the ones that will reasonate most with voters in 2004, and no matter how many people become uneasy with Bush's policies, people do not wish him to fail. Nor in good conscience should they. The United States is committed to making Iraq a stable country, and failure to do that means leaving an oil-rich vacuum for our enemies to fill. All of which means that Democrats, who would prefer to talk about jobs and health care and the Environmental Protection Agency and the Federal Drug Administration, had better get serious about foreign policy. They have to find some way to convince a public wary of changing horses in midstream that the first step in making Bush's policy a success is to get rid of Bush.

Jamie Malanowski is a New York writer.

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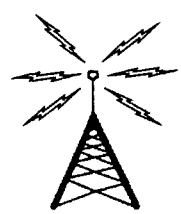

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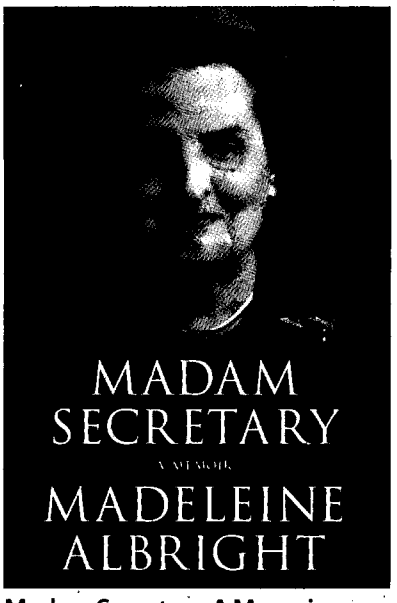
Dame Theory

What Madeleine Albright can teach Bush about toppling dictators.

By Eli J. Lake

Few secretaries of state have managed to collect as diverse an assortment of critics as Madeleine Albright. Foreign Service bureaucrats resented her for making policy with a tight group of advisors in her seventh-floor offices. Liberal interventionists slammed her record as Ambassador to the United Nations during the Rwanda crisis, when she lobbied to dismantle the small mission of U.N. peacekeepers just as Hutu militias began slaughtering hundreds of thousands of Tutsis. But no one had more venom for the secretary than the neoconservatives. To them, Albright was the cruise director on what George Will dubbed America's vacation from history. She may have sounded like a neocon when she spoke of America as the "indispensable nation," but she tried to cut deals with two of the three members of the axis of evil, Iran and North Korea, and she stood idly by as the economic sanctions she had championed early in the 1990s against its third member, Iraq, were whittled away by smuggling, lax enforcement, and outright defiance. A fine example of Albright's combination of weakness and *naïveté* was her frantic pursuit of Yasser Arafat at the U.S. Ambassador's residence in Paris in late October 2000, begging him not to leave yet another of her fruitless negotiations to end the war he was inciting against his old peace partner.



Madam Secretary: A Memoir
By Madeleine Albright
Miramax, $27.95

In her new memoir, *Madam Secretary*, Albright has few kind words for Arafat, calling him at various points, a "professional victim," and a "manipulator and survivor." During a visit to her farm in Virginia, her two-year old grandson let out a "piercing scream" at the first sight of the Palestinian leader. Such colorful touches are common in this often plodding and pedantic memoir focusing on Albright's four years, from 1997 to 2001, at the height of power. For example, she recounts how she learned of her Jewish ancestry from *Washington Post* reporter Michael Dobbs. Unfortunately, the book does not offer much in the way of news. We do learn that in 1998, Iran's Prime Minister Mohammed Khatami sent word to Arafat that Iran would support a negotiated settlement between Israel and the Palestinians—a position at odds with the charter of Iran's Islamic Revolution. She also confirms that, at the request of South Korean President Kim Dae Jung, President Clinton was indeed ready to travel to Pyongyang at the end of his presidency. But anyone expecting a persuasive rebuttal of the toughest charges frequently leveled against the Clinton administration's foreign policy—for instance, that the president was not as committed as he should have been to hunting Osama bin Laden, or that the United States failed to stop the Saudis beheading the two prime suspects in the 1996 bombing of Khobar Towers that killed 19 Americans—will be disappointed. Reading this book, Albright's conservative critics will be tempted to gloat that they were right about her all along.

Yet they do so at their own risk: As the Bush administration encounters one snag after another in Iraq, it is becoming clear that, at least as of today, Albright has proved a more successful regime-changer than the very neocons who coined the phrase. For all her efforts to cut deals with Arafat, Kim Jong Il, and the Iranians, this Czech refugee whose family escaped both Nazism and communism, demonstrated not only moral clarity but also effectiveness in opposing a ruthless and wily tyrant, Yugoslavia's Slobodan Milosevic. Albright's patient multilateral diplomacy, combined with forceful moral rhetoric and quiet funding for the opposition, may prove a far better model for ridding the Middle East of its dictators than last March's invasion.

Divine and overthrow

Albright's crowning moment came on Oct. 5, 2000 after Slobodan Milosevic clumsily tried to steal what turned out to be his final election and found

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himself overwhelmed by popular outrage on the streets of Belgrade and international condemnation abroad. I was on Albright's plane when CNN began broadcasting images of ordinary Serbs swarming into the parliament building in Belgrade. "You wouldn't believe what's happening," she told members of the press at the back of the plane. And she was right: We didn't. Or at least we hadn't. Months earlier, in September, her assistant James O'Brien had briefed reporters on the upcoming Yugoslav elections and how they fit into Albright's broader plan for driving Milosevic from power. Many reporters marveled at the secretary's *naïveté*. After all, they reasoned, the Serbian strongman would just steal the election and be done with it.

But as her memoir makes clear, Albright was playing a much longer game than many people then imagined and with far more moving parts than they knew. Her plan to topple Milosevic took shape as the Kosovo Liberation Army began its summer offensive against Serb security forces in July 1998. Milosevic responded with town-to-town sweeps which drove militants and civilians alike from their homes. It was those images of terrorized refugees flooding over the border into Albania, recalls Albright, that

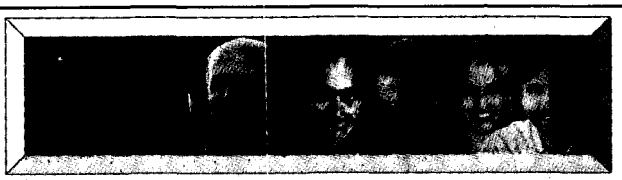
Albright's patient multilateral diplomacy, forceful moral rhetoric, and quiet funding for the opposition, may prove a far better model for ridding the Middle East of its dictators than last March's invasion.

helped her persuade a reluctant President Clinton and NATO to threaten force against Milosevic if he did not halt his attacks on the Kosovars.

But while Albright was laying the groundwork to make war on Milosevic's security forces and Yugoslav National Army in Kosovo, she plotted his overthrow in Belgrade by other means. Part of her strategy was to sow divisions between him and his key constituencies. "We needed to send the message," she writes, "to Serb businesspeople that he was bad for business, to the Serb military that he invited the destruction of their institutions, and to the Serb middle class that he was wrecking their hopes for a peaceful and prosperous future."

Before executives and the middle class, she dangled the carrot of joining Europe—offering for instance at the Rambouillet negotiations full normalization in exchange for the right to send a peacekeeping force into Kosovo, after she approved a plan to bolster Milosevic's opposition—an offer he ultimately rejected. That turned out to be a clever maneuver because it allowed her both to offer Milosevic a credible way to avoid war while also alienating him from one of his key constituencies in Serbia. Not only did it strengthen her hand with wobbly NATO allies, but it also helped her isolate Milosevic at home and set the stage for the coup de grace that followed the Sept. 24, 2000 election.

Albright further laid the groundwork for Milosevic's fall by bolstering



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the fractious internal opposition which he had always been able to divide and conquer in the past. Between 1998 and 2000, U.S. agencies like the International Republican Institute and the C.I.A. poured a little over $150 million into Milosevic's opposition, which went for pollsters who helped craft an opposition election message, expanded free media like the radio station B-92 and training for poll monitors, who eventually played a key role in discrediting Milosevic's claims to have won the election. State Department funding for the opposition included training in nonviolent action—which helped build a small student organization, Otpor, that became the backbone of the coalition that elected Vojislav Kostunica to the presidency. All the while, Albright continued to meet with anti-Milosevic Serb politicians and used her bully pulpit to make clear that the United States wanted "Milosevic out of power, out of Serbia, and in the custody of the war crimes tribunal." By the time Serbs and Montenegrins were ready to vote on Sept. 24, 2000, Europe and the United States were reading from the same page: the only way the country could join Europe was without Milosevic. By the spring of 2001, Milosevic was in a cell at the Hague, and Serbia was taking its first steps toward a democratic, European future.

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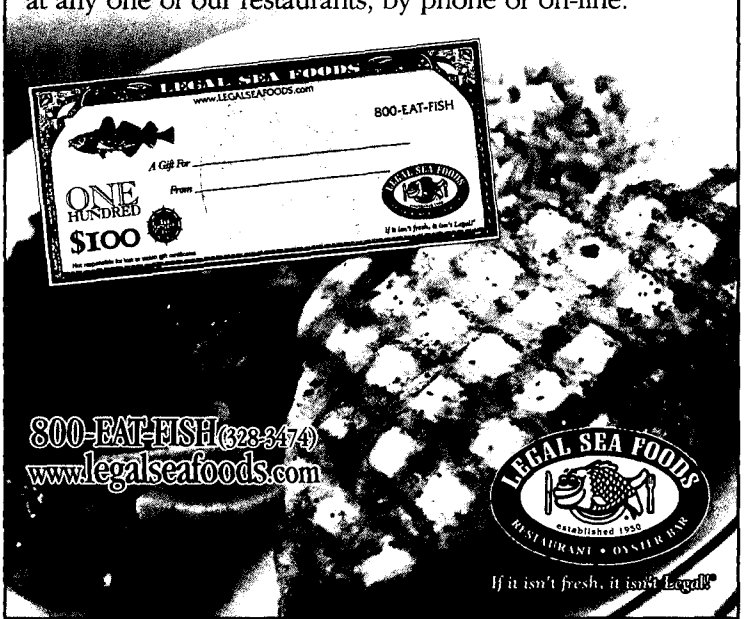

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Baghdad vs. Belgrade

Belgrade, of course, is not Baghdad. In Yugoslavia, there was enough political space to hold an election, albeit an imperfect one, and sufficient freedom to mobilize the forces of opposition. Force may have been the only way to topple Saddam's regime. But there's little doubt that had it been possible for him to have been overthrown from the inside rather than by foreign arms, many of the problems Iraqis and American soldiers are facing in the country today would be diminished. Moreover, Albright's Balkans strategy fundamentally relied on the military power and moral force of relatively coherent unified alliances. It is too soon to say whether the second Gulf War will spark a wave of democratic movements throughout the Middle East, as the president promised in his speech to the American Enterprise Institute before it began. But if it does, it would be infinitely preferable for those revolutions to be more of the Belgrade style than that of Baghdad.

In Iran, at least the neocons appear to recognize that the Albright approach may hold promise. Since June of 2002, the Pentagon's civilians have quietly pushed a plan to humiliate the mullahs, by publicizing some of their seamier overseas investments while, at the same time, funneling money and assistance to the country's democratic opposition. But the United States can't finish this job alone. To prompt the day when Iranians' aspirations for democracy are realized, the president should take another page from Albright's playbook: leveraging diplomatic pressure to corner noxious regimes in the diplomatic arena, not just on the battlefield. To date, the Europeans, to their shame, have enjoyed an active trade with Tehran, but as the Iranian nuclear weapons effort speeds ahead, they have grown increasingly wary, and the Bush administration should turn that wariness into a unified front. Mobilizing our European allies to isolate and destabilize the mullahs' regime could be as important a step as it was in the Balkans.

During her tenure, Albright often spoke about a Europe "whole and free." Despite her failures in the Middle East and Rwanda, she managed to advance that vision by removing the most wicked regime in Europe. President Bush has set himself an equally noble but far more difficult goal in the Middle East. It might be time for him to pay attention to how Albright achieved hers.

Eli J. Lake is the State Department correspondent for UPI.

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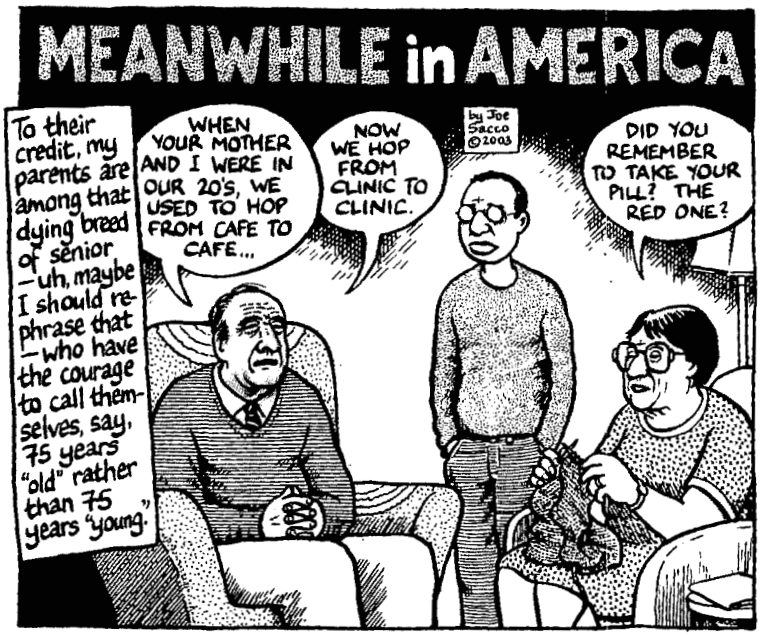
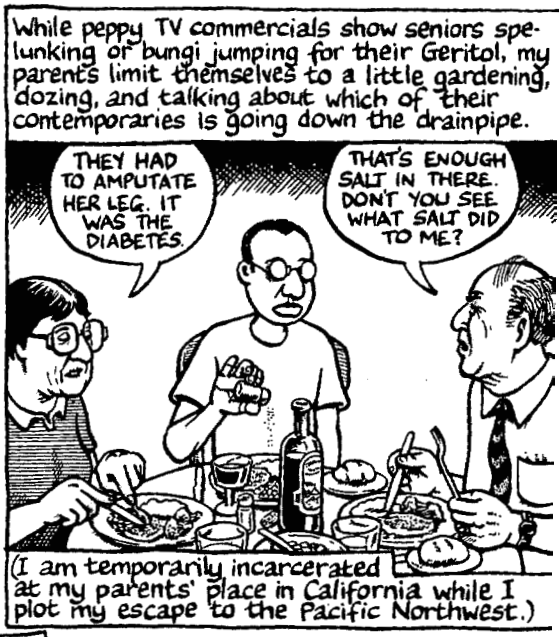
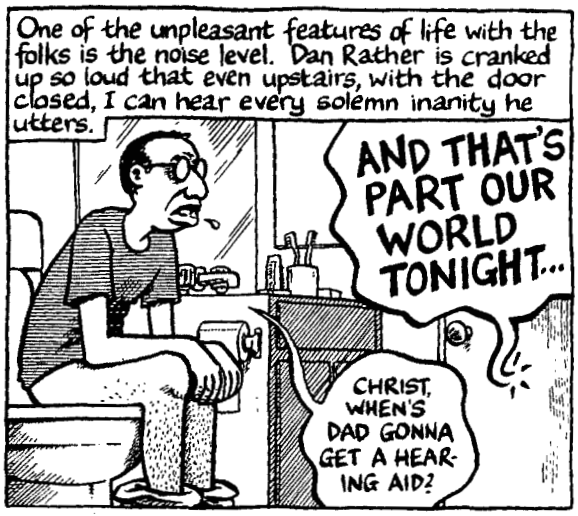
Meanwhile in **America** by Joe Sacco







I just don't get how my opinionated dad, who was a heavy socialist back in the Old Country and who last voted for Reagan (!!) in This One, could temper the political blood that courses through his veins. But he tells me he stopped voting before his religious conversion, that he'd already given up on the process. An example of his disgust:

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